Charteris (B) K.

THE DIFFERENCE Between True and False *CHRISTIANITY*, Plainly Represented in some DISCOURSES.

Written by the Reverend Mr. *Laurence Charters*, sometime Professor of Theology in the Colledge of *Edinburgh*.

And by it he being Dead, yet speaketh, Heb. 11. 4. —— *For ye have perverted the words of the Living* GOD, Jer. 23. 26.

EDINBUGH,
Printed by the Heirs and Successors of *Andrew Anderson*, Printer to the Queens most Excellent Majesty *Anno* DOM. 1703.

And are to be Sold by Mr. *Henry Knox* in the *Lucken Buiths* his Shop, and Mr. *David Freebairn*, &c.

BRITISH

TO THE

READER.

THE Apoſtle requires that the *Myſtery of the Faith be kept in a pure Conſcience.* A clean Veſſel is needful for this pure Liquor. This *New Wine muſt be put into new Bottles.* Men of *corrupt minds* cannot receive the Truth. *Unto the impure nothing is pure.* They *pervert the words of the living God*; and *wreſt them to their own deſtruction.* And when ſuch are Teachers of others, *their words eat as doth a canker*, and foſter corrupt nature in others; and the Word paſſing through their Minds and Tongues, is like water coming through a filthy channel, from which it receives a bad Tincture.

This has been ſadly verified in all ages. GOD of old times complained by His Prophets, That ſuch *Shepherds* made his *Flock eat that which they had trodden with their feet*; and *drink that which they had fouled with their feet*, Ezek. 34. 19. Our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST accuſed the Scribes and Phariſees in His time, That they *made the Commandment of* GOD *of none effect* by their *traditions*, Matth. 15. 6. And He Vindicates and Clears GOD's Law from their falſe and corrupt gloſſes, *Matth.* 5. 6, 7. And the Apoſtle forewarns us, 2 *Tim.* 3. 1, *That in the laſt days perrilous times ſhould come. For* (ſaith he) *men ſhall be lovers of their own ſelves*, &c. *And theſe alſo do reſiſt the Truth, men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerneng the Truth.*

That an univerſal Degeneracy and Corruption have overſpread all Chriſtendom cannot be denyed. That *that part* of it which has reformed from the *Roman Church* in Doctrine, is *as corrupt* in Life and Manners, is but too Evident. This all *Ranks* of People have great need to lay to Heart, and eſpecially they who are the *Paſtors* and *Teachers* of others; and to conſider if they are not guilty of the horrible things complained of by GOD, and lyable to the Woes and Judgements which he denounces againſt ſuch by His Prophet *Jer.* 23. 1, &c. *Woe to the ſhepherds that deſtroy and ſcatter the ſheep*

f my paſture, &c. —— *They ſtrengthen the hands* *evil doers, that none doth return from his wicked-* *eſs.* —— *They ſay unto every one that walk-* *th after the imagination of his own heart, No evil* *all come upon you.* —— *If they had ſtood in* *My Ways, and cauſed My People to hear My Words,* *hen they ſhould have turned them from their evil* *ay, and from the evil of their doings.*

It is not poſſible that Men could continue o be *Lovers of their own ſelves, covetous, proud, laſphemers, diſobedient to Parents, unthankful, nholy, without Natural Affection, Truce-breakers, alſe accuſers, incontinent, fierce, deſpiſers of thoſe hat are good, traitours, heady, high-minded, lo-vers of pleaſures more than Lovers of* GOD; And et becauſe of their *having a Form of God-ineſs*, while they *deny the power thereof*, look u-on themſelves as GOD's People and Choſen; f they did not entertain *falſe notions* of the Doctrine of JESUS CHRIST, and if His Words were not perverted by *falſe gloſſes.* They, of whatſoever Perſwaſion, who are Teachers of others, have great Reaſon to con-der what Hand they may have in all this, nd to lay it to Heart. What the Apoſtle ſaid o the believing *Hebrews* in his time, *Heb.* 5. 2. may be juſtly ſaid to us. *For when for the me ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one ach you again, which be the firſt principles of the*

Ora-

Oracles of GOD; *and are become such as ha*
need of milk, and not of strong meat.

The following Discourses aim to *shew t*
first Principles of the Doctrine of CHRIS
and to clear them from the mistakes and *fa*
glosses of corrupt Men. They are written wi
great Plainness, Simplicity, Sincerity an
Truth, with respect to no Party, but with
pure and disinterested *Zeal* for the true Doctri
of JESUS CHRIST, by one endued with th
Spirit of CHRIST, whose Life was a cont
nual Exercise of those Divine Principles, en
deavouring always to follow Him in *Humilit*
Meekness, Self denyal and taking up of the Cros
who laid no burthen upon others, but wh
He took upon Himself; who taught both *b*
Word and *by Deed*; who sought not himself no
the praise of Men, but *his life was hid wit*
CHRIST *in* God.

The Matters here treated of, are of th
greatest Moment. In many other things, we
may be mistaken in our Opinions, and yet do
no hurt thereby, either to our selves or others
But if in these we take up with false notion
and swerve from the Truth, we are in the
greatest hazard to undo our selves, to foster
corrupt nature in our selves and others, to
turn aside to vain jangling, to take up with a
Wisdom that is *Earthly, Sensual* D*vilish*, ha
ving *bitter, envying and strife in our Hearts*, *from*
whence

ence cometh confusion and every evil work, and be denyed that *Wisdom that is from Above*, ich is *first Pure, then Peaceable, Gentle, and e to be entreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, bout Partiality and without Hypocrisie.*

May we all seek after this Divine Wisdom *Silver*, and *search for it as for hid Treasure.* nd may the Divine Grace so accompany your rusal of the Excellent Instructions of this oly Man, that all of you, both Teachers and ople, may hear a Word behind you, who, *ng dead, yet* by these *speaketh* to you, saying; *is is the way walk ye in it; when ye turn to the ght Hand, and when ye turn to the Left.*

THE

THE FIRST DISCOURSE,

The Difference between a Living and Dead Faith.

JAMES II. Verſe 26.

For as the Body without the Spirit is dead, ſo Faith without Works is dead alſo.

THE greater part of Men do not obey the *Goſpel*, but follow their corrupt inclinations, and do what ſeems good in their own Eyes: They ſerve divers luſts and paſſions, and purſue their worldly and carnal intereſts, without any regard to the *Rules* preſcribed to us for the Conduct of our Lives. Yet in the mean time they ſooth and flatter themſelves as being Religious enough, and in a ſafe Condition, and entertain in their minds the *Hope* of Eternal Life, and of a bleſſed Immortality. This vain and groundleſs conceit and opinion of themſelves, and their *falſe hopes* prove hurtful and pernicious, fatal and deſtructive unto them.

In too many of this sort of Men, their *overweening opinion* of themselves, and of the state of their Souls, and their hopes of future happiness, are founded on such *weak and slender grounds* as these; that they have been *Baptised*, and have been admitted to the *Lords Supper*; That they are *well esteemed* by their Neighbours; that none can challenge them for any *scandalous behaviour*; that they live *so innocently* as they can; that they know more of *Matters of Religion* than many others; that they are *Sound* and *Orthodox* in their Opinions; that they are *Zealous* for these their Opinions, which they take for Truths; and have a great *Aversion* for all these who differ in Opinion from them; that they frequent the *Publick Meetings* for Worshipping GOD; and wait on all the Opportunities for receiving the *Sacrament* of the LORD's Supper; that they have adjoined themselves to such or such a *Party*; that they have performed diverse good and laudable *Actions*: Upon some of these and others of the like sort, they fancy and presume that they are in a very good State; and doubt not, but that it shall be well with them in the World to come.

This sort of Men being blinded by *Self-love* and not considering what the Terms are, on which GOD in His Infinit Mercy is to save sinful Man on the account of the Merits and Mediation of our *Blessed Saviour Jesus*, and to be

ow on them pardon of sin, and Eternal Life nd Blessedness, and not duely reflecting on he temper of their Minds, and the course of heir Lives, nor examining with due care whether they have performed the Terms pre-cribed by GOD to us for obtaining Eternal alvation, and on which alone it is to be ob-ained; Without more adoe conclude them-elves to be in a safe and happy State, and oubt not, but that GOD in His Infinite Mercy or the Merits of Christ shall bestow Eternal ife upon them.

But there are others, who being taught, that *Faith* and *Repentance* are the Condition on which lone all who are come to age, and have the se of Reason can be saved, do highly mistake hemselves, and on false and uncertain grounds, resume that they have performed these Terms, nd that they do Repent and Believe; And so onceive a sure Hope that they shall be saved. hey then come to consider themselves, as not oncerned in the threatnings denounced against n and Sinners, and do not regard the Warn-ngs which are given to us to flee from the vrath to come, and so are not awakned to flee rom it. These *hurtful* and *pernicious conceits* and houghts of themselves, and groundless hopes are herished by them: They are unwilling to part vith them, and can hardly be driven from them, ho they can never, until they abandon these,

have a right *Understanding* of their present state nor a well grounded *Hope* of the Life and Blessedness to come.

It may seem strange that *Men* should be so easily imposed upon, and be so willingly deceived in an Affair, which is of so great importance to them: But we will cease to wonder at it, if we duely consider, that it is deeply sunk in the Nature of *Man* to desire the continuance and perpetuity of his being in a *Happy State*, and that tho all *Men* are thus desirous to be Happy, yet our Nature is so corrupt, that *Men* are unwilling *to deny themselves*, and to renounce their own will and desires, and to follow such courses as are grievous to the flesh and obstructive to their carnal and worldly projects and designs, and so have a strong aversion from the only Terms on which Eternal Life may be obtained. The persons of whom we are now speaking, being unwilling to abandon those ways by which their pride and ambition, their sensuality and love of fleshly pleasures, or their covetousness or malice, or their other lusts and passions may be gratified, and yet being earnestly desirous to obtain Eternal Life: They endeavour by all means to find out a way, whereby they may at once freely indulge their lusts, and have the *Hope* also of being Happy in the World to come. They grasp at every thing which may beget or support such

Hope in them, while they continue in their
Disobedience to the Laws of the Gospel. They
now that Eternal Life and Blessedness is not
be obtained, or expected by us, but on the
Terms which are proposed to us in the Gospel;
nd that unless we *Believe* and *Repent*, we
annot be Saved; they therefore use such Arts
s they can, for assuring themselves that they
lieve and *repent*, tho they serve their Lusts
nd passions, and fulfill the Desires of their
leshly minds, and do whatsoever their cor-
upt inclinations and respect to their carnal and
Worldly Interests prompts them to.

There were, it seems in those days, where-
n this *Epistle* was written, diverse Persons,
who thought that their *Faith* would save them,
whatsoever their Lives and behaviour were,
nd without doubt there are not a few of this
ort of Men at this day, Such Men think that
ney *believe*, and therefore their Salvation is
ut of doubt with them; tho they do not *live*
greeably to the *Laws* of *Jesus*. Against this
ery pernicious Errour, the *Apostle* in the lat-
er part of this Chapter, does vehemently con-
end, and assert strongly, that there is a *dead*
aith, which cannot save Men, and that this
ead faith is a Faith without *works*: by which
wo Assertions, their foolish conceit of being in
State of Salvation, while they did not obey
he Laws of CHRIST, and did not bring forth
Fruit

Fruit to him, may be quite overthrown, and all their vain hopes of obtaining eternal Life may be shaken and dashed. These are sufficient, if Men have any regard for their Eternal Welfare, to convince them of their dangerous and destructive Errour and Mistake.

That there is a *dead Faith*, such as cannot avail us, is so evident that unless Men do willingly shut their Eyes, they cannot but see it. The *Apostle* here tells us that the *Devils believe and tremble*, and knowing how many are willing to hide it from themselves, he vehemently urgeth the knowledge and acknowledgement of it in these words. *But wilt thou know, O vain man, that Faith without Works is dead.* We hear that *Simon Magus* believed, and that many believed in the Name of *Jesus*, to whom he would not trust himself. In the Parable of the Sower our Saviour tells us, that *some received the Word* who receive no Benefit by it. And indeed they are very blind, who see not this *dead faith* to abound in all Christian Societies. Every Faith then is not a sound Faith: There is a kind of Faith that cannot save us.

This *Dead Faith* may be known, it is the Faith which is without *works*; The Faith which is without works of *piety*, *Righteousness* and *Charity*: It is the Faith which is separated from Obedience to the *Laws* of *Jesus*: the Faith which a man may have, and yet conti-

nue

ue to do his own *will*, and fulfill the desires of is Fleshly mind, and conform himself to the Vorld; such a Faith a Man may have, and et have no respect to the *Laws of Jesus*, but eglect the great and indispensable Duties of a hristian Life, and allow himself in the use of nlawful pleasures, or in covetous and oppresve courses, and in indulging his own lusts and assions, such a Faith is without doubt a *dead aith*, and surely every such Faith as is not *opative* and productive of *good works* is a *dead ith*. If we will abstract from this effect of aith, and this Power, Efficacy and Life f it, we will find no small *resemblance* betwixt found and *saving Faith*, and this *dead Faith*, s it is in some Persons, much like to that which betwixt a *Body* without the *Spirit*, and a *Body* nimated by the *Spirit*: their outward Figure, orm and Shape is the same, they have the me Members, only the former wants the *ife* and *motion*, which the other have. Some ersons being awakened to concern themelves for their eternal Wellfare, and knowng that *faith* is absolutely necessary in order o attainment of everlasting *Life*, and yet beng enslaved to their Lusts, and unwilling to eave such Courses, wherein their Lusts may e served and gratified, they endeavour accoring to the different apprehensions they have f the nature of Faith, to form it in themselves

in

in such a manner as that it may subsist in them and yet comply with the *liberty* which they resolve to take of indulging the Flesh, and the Lusts thereof. We do not say that they do expressly intend this, but by the imperceptible working of corrupt Nature, and the deceitfulness of their Hearts, they come thus to have a Faith formed in them, which resembles a true and saving Faith: they *believe* the Gospel, and assent to the *Truth* of the Christian Doctrine, and are sound and *Orthodox* in their Opinions, and do know and *profess* the Truth: they apply to themselves the *promises* of the Gospel, and *rely on Jesus* for obtaining Salvation and Eternal Life by him; it may be sometimes, hearing that it is necessary to do so, they give a formal and express *consent* to it, that he be their LORD and SAVIOUR, and resolve to obey him, *assure* themselves that he is their LORD and SAVIOUR, and that they shall be Saved by Him. Thus they may frequently seem to do with great Seriousness and Sincerity in some *fits* of Devotion, being instigated thereunto by their own Conscience, more throughly awakened by some Sermons, or by some sharp Afflictions, or by the apprehension of the approach of Death: Now this their Faith doth much resemble a Lively and Saving Fatih; only it too often wants the Life, Spirit, Power and Efficacy, which the other hath, and is still a dead Faith; the mere Carcase of it.

Some

Some there are, and of this sort there are too many, who being blinded by the inordinate *love* of themselves, presume without any evidence that they believe. They flatter themselves into an Opinion that they have *Faith*, tho they forget GOD, and cast his Laws behind their back: Having flattered themselves into a Persuasion that GOD loves them, and that they shall be Saved through the *merits* of CHRIST, they live without fear or apprehension of the Wrath which is coming, and doubt not but they shall be Saved; which is the effect of ignorance and self-love.

There are not a few, who tho their *Faith* be without *Works*, do nevertheless conclude that they have *Saving Faith* from some such Evidences, signs and *Marks* of Faith, as are either *false* or *uncertain*: and without doubt they are such, if they be separated from a course of humble *obedience* to the Laws of Jesus, a conscientious care to serve and obey him, and a dutiful respect to all his Commandment. They are *uncertain Marks* of Faith, if they may be where good Works are not, and they are then *false Markt*, when they are actually separated from an intire Subjection to GOD, and unreserved *obedience* to Him.

Some conclude that they have *Saving Faith*, from their having felt such things as are usually antecedent to a true and Saving Faith; such as

these,

these, that they have felt the *work of the Law* and have been by it brought to a conviction and sense of their sinful and wretched State and have been made sensible of the Hazard in which they were of Perishing, and of being Lost and undone for ever: that they have felt the *work of the Gospel*, and have by it seen the Excellency of CHRIST, and been perswaded *that He is able to Save to the uttermost, all who come unto GOD by Him*, they have seen that they can by no means save themselves, that there *is no Salvation for them in any other but in Jesus*, and that *there is no other Name by which we must be Saved*; they have been assured of his willingness, and readiness to receive and embrace all, whatsoever they have been, who come unto him; they have come to have a high esteem of him, and he hath been precious in their eyes; and they have had earnest desires after him.

They are also much confirmed in their opinion that they have a lively and *Saving Faith* from the experience they have of such things in themselves, as are common and ordinary effects and consequents of Believing, and of a lively and saving Faith. Such as these, they have found great *Sweetness* in the Discoveries which have been made unto them of the love of God in Christ, and a great warmness and melting of Heart, when the bitter Sufferings

nd the painful, shameful & cursed Death of our ORD and SAVIOUR have been Represented them; they have been much comforted by e *Promises* of the Gospel; they have been ear touched, and much moved in *hearing* some ermons, and have felt the power of the Word, nd their Hearts have been warmed, and burnt ithin them at some *Communions*, and they ave had some times much enlargement of eart in *Prayer*, and they suppose that they ave sometimes been admitted to a great dea f nearness to GOD, and familiarity with him, nd have had intimat *Communion* with him; nd some suppose that they have been favoured with special *visits*, manifestations, and uch other Love-tokens. They have found hemselves assisted and carried through some Difficulties, and have been helped in the performance of Religious Duties: they perform ome *Offices* of Religion with a great deal of ervour, and are *zealous* for such *Opinions* in Matters of Religion as they suppose to be solid, ound and *Orthodox*, and are much concerned or the *party* to which they have adjoyned hemselves,

From these, and the like *signs* and *marks*, Men may without doubt conclude that they ave a lively and *Saving Faith*, if with these here be in them a constant care to do the *Will f God*, and to observe and keep *all* his *Commandments*,

mandments, and to avoid every thing that is displeasing to him, and disagreeable to his Will and Laws, and be humble and not stubborn and self-willed, but submissive to God and obedient to his Laws, and have a due *respect for all his Commandments*: otherways, all the fore-mentioned Signs and Marks signify nothing. None of the common Works of the Spirit of GOD in the Souls of Men, can be sufficient Evidences of a true and Saving Faith; nor can any experience we have, prove such a Faith to be in us, if we have not experience of the Spirit's renewing our Natures, and *forming Christ in us*, and conforming us to him in the temper of our minds, and in the course of our Life, Sanctifying us, and *writing his Law in our hearts*, and *causing us walk in his Statutes*, teaching us to *do his will*, inclining, strengthening and inabling us to do whatsoever he Commands us, working in us *both to will and to do*, and removing the aversion, which is in our Natures, from the Holy ways of GOD, mortifying our Lusts, and subduing our Passions.

It is sure and certain, and we can admit no doubt about it, if we believe the Gospel, that *Saving Faith* cannot be without Works if there be time and occasion for it, whereſoever it is, it is operative, and does always produce *Love*, and by *Love*, (which begets in us a fixed and strong propension and inclination to please,

serve

erve and Honour GOD, and to be submissive o His Will in all things, and to obey His ommandments) it is productive of *Good Works*, nd of Obedience to GOD: *Faith worketh by ove.* Good Works are the proper and certain ffects of a lively and saving Faith. All *Knowdge* of the *Truth* and assent to it, all Transaions in the Soul, and its motions towards OD and Christ, which are not attended with bedience, and are destitute of *Good Works*, are ut weak and insignificant stirrings in the Soul owards Him, who is the proper and due Obct of its highest Esteem, Love and Affection; hey are but passing thoughts, which are of ttle or no Force and Efficacie, and airy notins. The Apostle tells us plainly we are nohing, that tho we *have all Faith*, if we want *harity, we are nothing.* It cannot be but that *aith without Works is a dead faith.* Since the oly Scriptures do so clearly teach us, and give s such assurance of it, that *without Holiness no Man shall see the LORD*, and that Jesus is the *uthor of Eternal Salvation to all them that obey im.* And that none have a *Right to the Tree of Life*, or can *enter into the City above*, but only *ey who do his Commandments.*

It sufficiently appears from what hath been id, that there are very few who have saving aith, and that the hopes of many are groundess, who supposing that they have Faith, look

to

to be saved, tho their Lives do evidently de
monstrate, that their faith is a *dead faith*. W
may see too many, who profess the Christia
Religion, and think that they have faith, an
that they believe in Jesus, but their *faith* is with
out *works*. There are too many whose faith
without *Devotion*, and without *Works of Piety*
They believe, but *GOD is not in all their thoughts*
they forget him, and do not worship Him, o
call on His Name: They have little or no Re
verence for His Name and Ordinances, an
upon any slender, weak and vain pretence
neglect His Worship; and proudly and pre
sumptuously prefer their own will to His, an
express little or no Regard for His Laws an
Commandments. The faith of many is with
out *Works of Righteousness*: They believe, bu
they care not how they carry and behave to
wards others; when the hope of more or less gai
invites, if no hurt or damnage be imported t
themselves thereby, they stand not to chea
deceive, and defraud their Neighbours; The
carry *proudly* and haughtily, and are unruly an
ungovernable, stubborn and disobedient t
their Superiors; They do much *Resent* the mo
petty injury, whether real or only fancied t
be an injurie, and are malicious and revenge
ful; They are *fierce and surly*, and take the free
dom to speak evil of others, and to traduce
calumniate and reproach them. The Faith o
ne

t a few is without *Works of Charity*, they care tle for others, if it be well with themſelves, hey conſider not others, and are little con- rned for them; They have little compaſſion r thoſe who are in diſtreſs, and will beſtow tle or no coſt or labour for their help and lief; They are hard hearted toward the poor d indigent, and do contemn, deſpiſe and ne- ect them. Some believe, but they *do not ve ſoberly*: They do not reſiſt the inclinations their corrupt nature to fleſhly pleaſures, but hen they are enticed, or even have but op- rtunity for it, they run *into exceſs of riot*, and ink drunk, or wallow into other impure leaſures. Under *affliction* many who think ey have Faith, either quite faint, or are utterly npatient. and they grudge and murmure. uch is the Faith of many: They believe, but ey are *worldly and covetous*, falſe and unjuſt, uel and oppreſſive in their dealings, and lye nd ſwear raſhly and falſly, when they may ain any thing by it, or avoid hurt or damnage. he Faith which the far greater part of theſe ave, who profeſs themſelves to be Chriſtians this corrupt age, is conſiſtent with the inor- inate love of the World, with the inordinate ve of themſelves, with unmortified luſts and nſubdued paſſions, with pride, covetouſneſs, enſualitie, with covetous and oppreſſive cour- es and practices, and with other manner of licen-

licentiousness. Men generally suppose th they believe, and that they have Saving Fait but they do their own willl, and indulge to th flesh, and conform themselves to the World their manners and customs. Such is the fait of most of men: Their faith is a *dead fait* which cannot save them, being witho Works.

THE SECOND

DISCOURSE

The Difference between Tru and false Repentance.

LUKE XIII. 3, 5.

Unless ye Repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

OUR Blessed LORD and SAVIOUR do here expressly tell us that *Repentance* indispensably required of us, and tha we cannot escape destruction unless we *Repen* We have no reason to doubt of the Truth that which our LORD here asserts once an again, but may with the greatest assurance co clude, that all who come to age, and are ca able of reflecting on themselves, and of con deri

ering their ways and doings, ſhall not eſcape ernal deſtruction, but ſhal periſh, unleſs they *epent.*

It is true that *Jeſus* by his humble *Obedience* nto Death, even the Death of the Croſs, did *erit* pardon of ſin, and did purchaſe Life and mmortality for poor ſinful Mortals, and that OD by the *Goſpel* calls us to the participation theſe great Things which *Jeſus* hath purchaſed: But it is no leſs true that theſe are not be beſtowed on any but ſuch as *Repent.* It is theſe Terms alone that we can obtain parn of ſin, and avoid eternal death and deuction, and be admitted to the poſſeſſion of ernal Life. *Repentance* is required of us as a ceſſary and indiſpenſable condition of parn of ſin and of Eternal Salvation.

This is the *Great Buſineſs* of the Preachers of e *Goſpel*, and of the Meſſengers, whom GOD nds to treat with us; Even to call us to Re*ntance.* *John* the Baptiſt did thus begin his iniſtry; And Chriſt himſelf, when he firſt tered on the publick Exerciſe of his Office, *eached* *Repentance*, and called men thereunto. hereſoever the Goſpel is preached in any ge of the World, GOD by it calls all Men, d commands them to *Repent.* All the Effects the Divine Providence, towards our ſelves, the Society in which we live, have a tenncy to awaken us, and to move us to *Repent*

and to turn to GOD; Whether these be th
Effects of his Mercy, Goodness, Long-sufferin
and Forbearance, or of his Justice and Severi
ty, Anger and Displeasure; All the Effects o
his Bounty, Goodness and Patience toward
us: As also, all his Rods and the Judgement
which He inflicts on us, do call us to Repen
tance.

Notwithstanding that the LORD doth s
earnestly, and by so many Means call us t
Repentance, and tho He doth so plainly repre
sent to us the necessity of *Repentance,* if w
would be saved, yet few *repent of their wicke*
ness, few say, *What have I done? Every one turn*
eth to his course, as the horse rusheth into the batt
It was thus in former Ages, and is so still
Men generally continue to be such as former
they were, and live as they have done; The
do not think on a change of their temper an
course of Life, whatsoever GOD say to ther
by His Messengers, or whatsoever He do t
them. The covetous, ambitious, luxurious
malicious, fraudulent, *&c.* continue to be suc
persons, tho they be warned of the wrat
which is coming, and it be plainly told them
by His Messengers, That *unless they repent, the*
shall certainly perish, nevertheless they continu
still in their impenitencie, and harden thei
hearts to such a degree, that all the Mean
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which are uſed for their Recovery, have no effect upon them.

It may be enquired whence it comes to paſs that Men, being ſo much concerned to *Repent*, and being frequently and plainly told of the abſolute Neceſſity of *Repentance*, go on ſtill in their ſinful ways, and continue impenitent. It may ſeem a very ſtrange and unaccountable thing, that Men ſhould be ſo mad as wilfully and wittingly to ruine and deſtroy themſelves.

Some are ſo *ſenſual* and brutiſh, ſo dull and ſtupid, that they are not at all touched with any thing, which doth only concern their *Soul* and their future ſtate in the World to come. They have ſome uſe of their Reaſon and Underſtanding in the management of their worldly affairs, only in this buſineſs, which imports moſt, they ſeem to be wholly void of Reaſon and of the Underſtanding of Men, and do not behave as Reaſonable Creatures. They are paſt feeling, and have no ſenſe of any thing of this kind, tho it be plainly and clearly repreſented to them. Their hearts are waxed groſs and GOD in His juſt Indignation for their ſins, hath plagued them with this ſore judgement; He hath given them a *ſpirit of ſlumber*, ſo that *they have eyes and ſee not, ears and hear not, hearts but do not underſtand.*

Some are ſo blinded with *ſelf-love*, that tho

it be fully and plainly represented to them, that *unless they repent* and turn to GOD, they shall without doubt perish, yet they continue in their sins; And notwithstanding all the severe threatnings of GOD denounced against impenitent sinners, they promise *Peace* to themselves, and will not let go their vain and groundless hopes of Eternal Life, presuming on the *Infinit Mercy of GOD*, and the *Merits* of our blessed Saviour. Tho their sinful state be represented to them, and the Necessity of a *Change* of the temper of their Minds, and of the course of their Lives, they have no mind to it, but resolve to hold on in their sinful ways and courses, and yet they hope still that it shall be well with them, and as well as those, who make more ado about their Salvation; And they can by no means be drawen from these their false and *presumptuous hopes.* They hope still, tho they continue to live, as they have done, and do not amend their ways and doings.

There are too many, tho they hear and understand that they are lost and undone for ever, unless they *repent*, yet they go on resolutely in their own ways. They would be content to obtain Salvation and to avoid destruction; But they like not the Terms on which alone they may avoid the wrath which is coming, and may obtain Eternal Life. They are so much

much in love with their ſinful ways, and are ſo enſlaved to their ſenſual and brutiſh luſts and paſſions, and ſo reſolute to fulfil the deſires of their fleſhly minds, that they will rather ruine and deſtroy themſelves, than abandon their vain and ſinful courſes of Life. Theſe Men *chuſe death and deſtruction*, and may juſtly be ſaid to *love it*, it being the neceſſary conſequent of final impenitency. They will rather die and periſh eternally, than renounce their own will, and forſake their ſinful ways and corrupt courſes, and ſubject themſelves to GOD, and live Holy and Religious Lives.

But the greater part of thoſe, who hear the Goſpel, ſeem to ſuppoſe that they have already Repented, and not a few, perſwade themſelves of it. Thus they put by all the *Warnings* which were given them of the wrath which is coming, and all the *Calls of GOD* to Repentance, while thinking that they have Repented, they look on themſelves as not concerned therein. They know not the Nature of *True Repentance*, and take that for it, which is not it, and do dangerouſly miſtake about it.

Some ignorant perſons think that they are true Penitents, if they *confeſs* that they are ſinners, and *crave mercy* from GOD, and pray Him to pardon their ſins; if they expreſs ſome grief and *ſorrow* for their ſins, tho they do not know particularlie wherein they have tranſ-

greſſed

greſſed the Laws of GOD, and have little o no ſenſe of any particular ſin; And if they b charged with any ſin, whether of omiſſion, o of commiſſion, whereof others of their ran and condition are ordinarlie guiltie, they ei ther deny or mince it, and juſtifie them ſelves.

Some doubt not but they have repented, be cauſe they have been convicted of ſin, and hav had aſenſe of many particular ſins, which the have committed, and have been troubled *an grieved* for them. Of this conviction there ar diverſe degrees: Some are *challenged* by thei Conſcience for one or more grievous crime for which they are filled with horrour and con fuſion: Some are ſenſible not only of a few o their greater and more crying ſins of *commiſſion* but alſo of many ſins of *omiſsion*. They ar convinced that they have too much neglected the *Means* of Grace, that they have not cared to know GOD, and His Will revealed to us that they have forgotten Him; that they have not acknowledged Him for the Effects of Hi Bounty and Goodneſs; that they have no prayed to Him; that they have neglected the great Salvation propoſed to us in the Goſpel that they have undervalued the Love and Fa vour of GOD, and have deſpiſed all the great Things purchaſed by our bleſſed Sauiour at ſo dear a rate; that they have not duely attended

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he ſolemn Meetings for the Worſhip of GOD, nd have neglected the performance of ſeveral ther Duties of Religion. Such *Convictions* may eturn often, either when Sickneſs or Pain eizeth upon them, or on occaſion of any onſiderable Loſs or Dammage ſuſtained by hem, or of ſome other Trouble and Affliction r of ſome publick Calamities, wherein they hemſelves are, or may be involved, or of the earing of ſome awakening Diſcourſe, or Sermon, or at a Communion. In ſome the Effects of ſuch Convictions are more remarkable, nd they are affected with *ſhame and ſorrow*, and re filled with *fear* and *terrour* from the apprehenſion of the Divine Wrath and Vengeance due to them for their Sins, Such People do uſually look on themſelves as true *penitents*, and ſo do others take them to be ſuch, ſeeing them expreſs ſo much Grief and Sorrow for their Sins.

There are ſome, who come a ſtep further, they are not only convinced of the ſinfulneſs of the by-paſt courſe of their Lives, and are grieved for it, but they alſo *purpoſe* and *reſolve* to do no more, as they have done, and to continue no more ſuch perſons as they have formerly been, but to *amend* their ways and doings, and to forſake all their vicious courſes and practices, and from henceforth to live unto God, and do his will, and obey his Commandments.

mandments. Thus many do when they are awakened by the ſenſe of their ſin, and the fear of the Wrath that is coming; they reſolve on another courſe of Life, and purpoſe to renounce all *ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live righteouſly, ſoberly and Godly* for the future: and now theſe people think that there is no doubt to be made of the Truth of their Repentance. But with too many this fit is ſoon gone, and they continue, notwithſtanding theſe their purpoſes and reſolutions to be ſuch perſons as formerly they were. If we look about us, we cannot but obſerve it in many perſons, who when they are in ſickneſs, and eſpecially, if they be apprehenſive of the approach of Death, or are under any heavy trouble and affliction, ſeem very reſolute to forſake their ſinful ways and courſes, and to live holy Lives, that within a little time after their deliverance from their Fears or Troubles, it appears how *weak* all their *good purpoſes* and *reſolutions* were, and how little effect all their vows and promiſes to reform their Lives have.

Some Men not only purpoſe to amend their Ways and Doings, but they alſo *begin* to do it, and for ſome time ſhorter or longer are much changed to the better, and ſeem to be quite other perſons, than formerly they were. Theſe think that they have good and ſufficient ground to judge that they have truely Repented,

ed, and others cannot but judge well of them. But this their *goodneſſe is as the morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.* Theſe fits of Goodneſs do quite evaniſh, and they return to be ſuch perſons as formerly they were, and elapſe into their former courſe of Life, or they become worſe than they were formerly.

But there are ſome, who not only for a little time abandon their vicious courſes, but they *quite forſake them*, and never more return thereunto. So ſome who were given to exceſs in drinking come to be ſober, ſome who were accuſtomed to Swear raſhly, and on every light occaſion to profane the holy Name of God, ceaſe to do ſo any more, and ſo ſome forſake ſome of the ſinful ways, in which they walked. Theſe perſons think that on that account they may conclude that their *Repentance is found*, tho in the mean time they neglect moſt of the Duties of a Chriſtian Life, and have not *reſpect to all the Commandments of God.*

There are alſo ſome, who not only forſake many of their ſinful and vicious courſes, but *do* likeways *many things* in compliance with the Laws and Rules preſcribed to us. There are not wanting ſuch as make a great Profeſſion of Religion, and appear very concerned and zealous for Truth and Righteouſneſs. Theſe Perſons are often very diligent & active in the performance of the *external Offices* of Religion,

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and attend carefully on, all the *publick Ordinances*; they run hither and thither to hear *Sermons*, and pretend to no little care to avoid whatsoever hath any appearance of evil, and adjoyn themselves to the Godly party. Thus they come to suppose themselves to be *true penitents*, and are esteemed such by others, tho they continue still enslaved to the love of the World, and indulge to their Lusts in many things, and do not subject themselves intirely to Jesus.

Besides those persons, who, tho the necessity of *Repentance* be plainly intimated to them, do not obey the Call and Invitation of GOD to return, there are yet too many others, who are conscious to themselves that they have not *repented*, & who know also that they must repent, or perish, and do therefore resolve to repent, but *they cannot be moved presently* to do it, and put it over to another time. On the one hand they are pressed and urged to Repent and turn to God, by their *Conscience* representing to them that they are undone for ever, *unless they repent*: on the other hand, their *Lusts* pull them back, and they are holden by the cords of their own Iniquities. To stop the clamours of their own Conscience, they *resolve* to *repent*, and turn to God, and to gratify their Lusts, they design to indulge to them a while longer, and to delay and put off their Repentance until

l another time. Some of them take it to be ſo aſie a matter to Repent, that they doubt not o diſpatch it at any time they think fit, tho it ere the laſt moment of their Life: they think hat they may Repent when they will; ſo they ut it off for the preſent time, and reſolve to o it afterwards at a *more convenient Seaſon.*

Theſe and all others who continue in their *mpenitency,* are too much enſlaved to the *love f the world,* and of the things which pertain o this preſent Life, and have little or no regard for their future ſtate in the World to come. They would be well here, and would ive at eaſe, and would do their own will, and would have their Luſts and carnal appetits gratified. *Preſent things* and ſuch as are ſeen by them are moſt in their hearts, *future hopes* and *fears* have little influence on them, which come to paſs either by their unbelief, or want of due conſideration. *They look onely* at *the things which are ſeen* and are preſent, and are agreeable to the Fleſh, and either do not believe, and are not throughly perſwaded of the reality of Eternal Bliſs and Miſery, or do not duely conſider the Excellency of that Bleſſed State which is promiſed, nor how much Eternal Miſery is to be dreaded and feared. This is the *root of mens contumacy,* and diſobedience to the Call and Command of GOD, and of their impenitence, that they have a paſſionat regard

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and respect for the things which are seen; th
they be but *temporal*; but they have little o
no regard for the things which are *not seen*, th
they be *eternal*.

That it may be the better known what *Repentance is*, which our LORD here asserts to be so necessary, if we would avoid Eternal Death and Destruction, it will not be unfit briefly and plainly to shew what it is to Repent, that if it may be, some may be rescued from these and the like too common mistakes, which prove so pernicious to Men.

Repentance is nothing else, but returning from our sinful ways to God to serve and obey Him. It is a thorough and lasting change of Temper, and course of Life. To Repent is, *to cease to do evil*, and *to learn to do good*, to forsake our corrupt and sinful ways and courses, and to live Religious and Holy Lives; it is to renounce our own will, our corrupt inclinations, desires and appetites, and to subject ourselves to Jesus, and to obey the Laws of the Gospel, and to form the temper of our minds, and the course of our Lives according thereunto; it is to *renounce all ungodliness, and worldly Lusts, and to live Godly, Righteously and Soberly in this present world.*

This is the great and Substantial part of *Repentance*; but there are ordinarily other ingredients in it, which it will be fit to mention,

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nd the rather becauſe theſe, or the Semblance f them are for the moſt part, the grounds on hich moſt men ſuppoſe themſelves to have epented, while they are far from true Re- entance. *Repentance* then reſpects partly the *paſt time* of our Lives, and partly the *time to ome*, it looks both backward and foreward.

In regard of the time paſt, there is in it *con- viction*, which is the knowledge and ſenſe of in. The *true penitent* ſees and is very ſenſible f it, that he hath done many things, which he hould not have done; he now clearly perceives, nd ſufficiently underſtands that he hath lived ſinful Life, and hath loſt time paſt, and hath aſted and worn it out in ſin and folly.

Being thus convinced, he does not hide his ins, but acknowledges them and *confeſſes them o God.* And when he doth confeſs them, he loth *not excuſe* or mince them, but rather ag- gravates them, and repreſents to himſelf all uch circumſtances, as may make them to ap- ear more grievous. Conſidering with him- elf the infinite Mercy of GOD in CHRIST, his readineſs to pardon, and to ad- mit to his Grace and Favour thoſe who are pe- nitent, he preſents himſelf before God and makes a full and ſincere *Confeſſion* of his ſins, and does freely and humbly acknowledge them.

Conſidering his innumerable and great tranſgreſ-

transgressions, he doth *Judge and Condemn himself*. He sees himself to be very Guilty, and he pronounceth Sentence against himself, that he deserves Eternal Death and Destruction. He freely acknowledges, that he deserves no Favour, and that Eternal punishment is due to him; and that if he shall escape from it, he will owe it to the infinite Mercy of GOD in CHRIST.

The Sense which the True Penitent hath of his Sin does wound, and pierce his Heart; he is affected with *grief and sorrow*, and is filled with *shame and Confusion*. It grieves him while he thinks how *disobedient* he hath been to God his Maker, and continual Benefactor, with what insolence he hath *despised* his Gracious Calls and Invitations, how much he hath undervalued his Promises, and contemned his Threatnings, how light he hath made of the Great Salvation proposed to us in the Gospel, and of all the Great Things, which our Saviour purchased with his Blood. While he reflects upon his many and great Transgressions his Soul is deeply humbled, his Heart is broken and contrite, and rent as it were with grief and sorrow; and he is greatly displeased with himself, and doth loath and abhor himself.

Such is *true repentance* in respect of the *time past*, but it stops not here, it respects also the

time

me to come. If it proceed no further, it is not ue and compleat Repentance: it is Defective nd is not *that* *Repentance* which is the indis-ensable Condition of the Terms fixed and fit-ed by God, on which pardon of sin, Delive-ance from the Wrath to come, and a Right nd Title to Eternal Life are to be obtained.

As it respects the *future part* of our Life, here is in it a sincere, deliberate and *firm pur-ose* and resolution to Reform and amend. All *rue penitents* do fully determine and resolve whatsoever it may cost them, to relinquish and *bandon* their vain and sinful ways and courses, nd to bestow due care and Diligence for the future to conform themselves to the Rules pre-cribed by the Lord Jesus and to His Example. None do truely *Repent*, who do not purpose to obey the Lord Jesus without any Reservation, nd to take His Yoke upon them, and to do whatsoever He commands us. All true Peni-ents, purpose, promise, and vow Obedience o Him, trusting to the Promises which He hath given us of His Aid and Assistance, and of the Influence of His Spirit.

But true *Repentance* does not stop in purposes and promises of amendment. They who do truely Repent, *perform their purposes*, promises, and vows to GOD, and are quite changed from what they were. They do no more *their own will*, they do no more serve their lusts, and fulfil

fulfil the appetites and deſires of their fleſhly nature. Neither do they any *more conform themſelves* to the World, but they do the Will of Jeſus, and follow Him. This their Subjection, Submiſsion and Obedience to Him is not a Fit of Godlineſs, which is ſoon gone but it is a *Permanent thing*, which continues with them ſo long as they live. All who do truely repent, by *patient continuance in Well doing ſeek for Glory, Honour and Immortality.*

This is the chief and moſt *Eſſential* part of *true repentance*, without which all the other things in it come to nothing.

We ſhould ſo long as we are in the World carry and behave as it becomes humble Penitents. Our *Repentance* ſhould not end, but with our lives. We ſhould preſerve in our ſelves a great ſenſe of our ſins, and on the account thereof be of a mournful temper, and ſhould have the *ſentence of death in our ſelves*, that all our boaſting and rejoycing, and all our hopes may be founded on the infinite Mercy of GOD through Jeſus Chriſt. We ſhould through the whole courſe of our Lives continue of the Temper, and in the poſture of humble Supplicants, begging Mercy from GOD for the ſake of Jeſus; And ſhould daily reflect on our ſelves, that finding what remains to be corrected, reformed and amended in us, we may continue our earneſt endeavours in promoting the Work

f Reformation in our ſelves. We ſhould in ur ſeveral Stations bring forth *Fruit unto* GOD: nd being ſenſible how much we have by our nful lives diſhonoured Him, we ſhould endea- our through the remaining part of our lives o *honour* and glorifie Him by expreſsing in all ur words and actions, *a great reverence for Him, due reſpect for His Commandments, an earneſt de- re to pleaſe Him, our preference of His Will* to our wn will and deſires, and to our carnal and orldly intereſt, our firm *belief* of His Pro- iſes and Threatnings, and our diſeſteem and *ntempt* of all the moſt valuable things of this Vorld, being compared with the Favour and *ove* of GOD, and the *Glory* and Bliſs of that ife, to the Hope whereof we are called. hus are we ſtill to bring forth *Fruit*, and to o *Works* meet for *Repentance*.

Let us often repreſent to our ſelves the *Ne- ſſity* of Repentance, and bear it in upon our inds, that unleſs we Repent we cannot avoid erlaſting deſtruction, but ſhall certainly pe- ſh, that being thereby awakened we may no nger delay to hearken to the *Call* of the Goſ- el, and may reckon it to be downright mad- eſs to continue in our diſobedience and impe- itence; Since we are aſſured that we ſhall us deſtroy our ſelves, and ſhall undoubtedly eriſh, without *Hope* of Recovery to all eterni- . Let us conſider what *true Repentance* is, that

by the knowledge of its nature, all these mi-stakes which prove so mischievous and pernicious to Men, while they thereby cheat and deceive themselves in this so important Affair, may be quite driven away from us. Let us think often on it, and seriouslie consider what *true Repentance* is, that we may fullie perceive, may be throughly assured that it is not so easie to Repent as most Men take it to be, & that it is a very dangerous thing to delay, and put it off till Sickness seize on us, and death approach to us. It seems too severe and hard to affirm that *true Repentance* is then impossible, but this may be safelie, warrantablie, and confidentlie asserted, that none can be then in an ordinarie way fullie assured of the Truth of that their late Repentance, and so cannot be assured of their Salvation, since they have not opportunitie to give proof of the Soliditie and Soundness of their Repentance, by *bringing forth fruits meet for it*, and are not in such a condition that they can have sure and certain Evidences of it.

THE

THE THIRD DISCOURSE;

The Difference between a Real and Phariſaical Righteouſneſs.

MATTHEW XXIII. Verſe 23.

Wo unto you Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrites; For ye pay tithe of Mint and Aniſe, and Cummin, and have omitted the weightier Matters of the Law, Judgement, Mercy, and Faith: Theſe ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

THESE *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, to whom our LORD here directs His Speech, were perſons, who, as it appears in the Hiſtorie of the Goſpel, were very *nice* and ſcrupulous about *little things*; But made light of *things* of far *greater importance*: They did *ſtrain at a gnat*, as it is ſaid in the following words, and yet ſtood not to *ſwallow a Camel*. Againſt theſe Men our LORD here prononnces a *Woe*, and gives them a very bad character, calling them *Hypocrites*. He treats them thus ſeverely;

becauſe while they were thus careful in the performance of the *leaſt* duties injoined by the Law; They neglect the *greater and weightier matters* of it. He doth not expreſs any diſpleaſure againſt them for doing theſe leſſer things; but that while they would thereby appear to be very much concerned for Religion, they omitted *Judgement, Mercy, and Faith*, to which in the Goſpel according to St. *Luke* chap. 11. ver. 42. is added the *Love of God*, which are Matters of far greater weight and moment. Theſe (ſaith he) *ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

It will not be unfit here to ſpeak a little of thoſe things, 1. *That all* Duties *and Offices of* Religion *are not of equal weight and moment, but that ſome are of greater weight and concernment, and ſome of leſſer.* 2. *That there were and ſtill are not a few in all ages, who omitting the weightier Matters of the Law, are very punctual in performing the leſſer.* 3. It may be inquired, *whence this proceeds?* 4. It may be alſo inquired, *how it comes to paſs that our Lord deals ſo ſeverely with thoſe Men.* And *Laſtly*, That *tho the chief of Mens care ſhould be beſtowed in performing the weightier Matters of the Law, yet the leſſer are not to be neglected.*

That among the Duties of Religion, which GOD hath injoined, ſome are of *greater weight*; Beſides what is here ſo plainly and expreſly ſaid by

by our LORD, there are many other paſſages in the Scripture, which do ſufficiently inform us. GOD tells us by the Prophet *Hoſea*, chap. 6. ver. 6. *That he deſires Mercy and not Sacrifice* which words are cited once and again by our Lord and Saviour, *Matth.* 9. 13, 12, 7.) tho both were commanded; but of the two he deſires *Mercy* rather than *Sacrifice*, & ſo the next words explain the former, wherein he ſaith that he deſired *the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings*, Pſalm 40. 6. the Wiſer and more Godly in all ages had this ſenſe, as may be ſeen in the *Pſalmiſt*, and in the *Scribe*, who is ſaid to have anſwered our Lord diſcreetly, who ſaith that *to love God with all the heart, and with all the Underſtanding, and with all the Soul, and with all the Strength, and to love his Neighbour as himſelf, is more than all whole burnt offerings and Sacrifice*, Mark 12. 33.

Without doubt ſome of the Duties of Religion are of *greater weight* and importance than others, even ſuch of them as are more eſpecially recommended to us, and are more preciſely and peremptorly enjoined, ſuch as tend more to the *Glory of God*, being more expreſſive of our *Love*, Fear and Reverence for Him, of our *Subjection* to Him, of the *Reſignation* of our ſelves to Him, of our *Preference* of *His Will* to our own, and to all worldly concerns, ſuch as tend moſt to the *mortifying* corrupt nature in us, and to the advance-

advancemet of the Soul in *Purity*, and tend more immediately and directly to the fitting and disposing us for partaking of the *Special Communications* of the Divine Goodness; And such as are more *Useful* to others, and *Beneficial* to them.

The Instances which our Saviour here gives of the *weightier Matters of the Law*, which the Pharisees omitted, are *Judgement*, *Mercy*, and *Faith*, to which (as hath been said) is added *Luke* 11. 33. the *Love of God*. By *Judgement* we are to understand *Justice* in all our dealings with Men, *giving* to every Man whatsoever is *due* to him, and *abstaining* from all *Injustice*, Fraud, Deceit, and Violence, and from all kind of injury and wrong to others. By *Mercy* is to be understood *Pity* and Compassion towards the Miserable, the Afflicted, Poor and Needy; And it is opposit to *hardness of heart*, neglect of others in their trouble and affliction, rigour and cruelty towards those who have no Means to protect themselves; It is a readiness to help and succour such as stand in need of our assistance. By *Faith* here by most Interpreters is understood *Faithfulness*, Honesty and Candour, in our dealing with Men. By the *Love of God* is meant inward *Devotion* of the Soul towards GOD, when that *Love* is prevalent, and eats out the Love of all other things.

These

Theſe our Lord and Saviour accounts the *weightier Matters of the* Law. Without doubt they are far miſtaken, who reckon ſome of theſe to be of no great weight and moment, and look on *Mercy*, and *Judgement*, and *Faith*, as no ſuch important Duties, and as ſuch as may be ſome time diſpenced with, and think that Men may be *Religious* enough, tho they be not ſo *exact* in theſe, and have no regard for them. This is a dangerous and hurtful *miſtake*, and in too many a *wilful* miſtake, and flatly contradictory to the *Verdict* of our Lord here, who does plainly declare, That theſe are the *weightier Matters of the* Law, as they are elſe-where repreſented, *Mic.* 6. 8. *Tit.* 2. 12. as the moſt neceſſary and the moſt ſubſtantial Part of Religion.

2. That *there have been in all Ages too many ſuch Perſons, who, while they neglected theſe weightier Matters, were very forward in performing the leſſer*; All who read the Writings of the Prophets and the Hiſtory of the Goſpel, as it is written by the Evangeliſts, with any meaſure of attention, cannot be ignorant. There were of elder times, as alſo of latter, many among the Jews, who appeared very zealous for the external part of the worſhip of God, and were very careful in the outward performances of Piety; they diligently attended the ſolemn *meetings*, they offered Sacrifices, they ſought God daily; and ſeemed

ſeemed to delight to know his ways, and to take pleaſure in approaching to him, they abounded in ſuch expreſſions of reſpect for God, for his Worſhip and Religion: but yet in the mean time they neglected *inward Devotion* of the Soul towards God, and omitted *Judgement*, *Mercy* and *Faith* towards Men. They *faſted* and made many *Prayers*; but they would not deal *juſtly*, honeſtly, faithfully and mercifully with others: notwithſtanding of their *pretences* of Piety they were *cruel*, unjuſt, falſe and oppreſſive in their dealing. They *talked* much of God and Religion, but had little *inward reſpect* for him, he was *near in their mouth, but far from their reins.* Such Perſons were theſe *Scribes* and *Phariſees* againſt whom Chriſt denounceth a *wo*. And without doubt there were no few like them among the Jews; they *payed the Tithes of Mint*, &c. and were careful in performing the leſſer Duties of Religion; they *faſted twice a week*, at leaſt ſome did ſo, but they were *covetous*, *ambitious*: they *made long Prayers*, and were very officious in the outward offices of Piety; but they paſſed over *Judgement* and *the love of God.* They were very induſtrious in making *Proſelites* to their way and party; but had no care to make them *truely Religious.* It is not only among the Jews that ſuch Perſons were to be found, there have been too many in all the ſeveral Societies of *Chriſtians* in all Ages,

Ages, and ſtill are at this day. There are too many that have a *form of Godlineſs*; *but denying the power of it*, 2 Tim. 3. 5. They attend duely upon the publick Ordinances, and go hither and thither to *hear* Sermons, and *pray* often, and *talk* much of Religion; they ſeem to be very concerned for their *Opinions* which they hold, and for their own way, yea even to ſuch a Degree that they induſtriouſly labour to make *Proſelites* to their way and party, and are glad, when their *endeavours* for that effect prove ſucceſsful, and *Condemn* all others, who are not of their way and Opinion, and refuſe to converſe with ſuch, and ſay in effect, tho they are aſhamed to expreſs their minds in this form with thoſe mentioned by the Prophet, *ſtand by thy ſelf, come not near to me: for I am holier than thou.* They are very forward, and active in all *outward parts* of Religion, and expreſs a great *zeal* for the leſſer Matters, while in the mean time, they paſs over *judgement, mercy*, and *the love of God.* The defect of the *internal Devotion* of the Soul cannot be known to others; but their *Cruelty* and *injuſtice, their fraud, deceit* and *oppreſſion*, their *Calumnies, reproaches* and *evil ſpeakings*, their *covetous practices*, their *contempt of others*, their *little regard for peace* and *concord*, and the *defect of Love* and *Charity* in them are often too viſible.

Becauſe the *corrupt Nature* of Man does ſo much

much incline him thus to vitiat and quite pe
vert true Religion, the *Prophets* of old, and a
ter our *Lord himſelf*, and *his Apoſtles*, in oppo
ſition to the corrupt Sentiments of ſuch Peo
ple, and the falſe Repreſentation they made o
Religion do frequently and plainly ſhew tha
true Religion conſiſts mainly in the *love of Go*
and the inward Devotion of the Soul toward
him, and in the due and careful performanc
of the Offices of *Juſtice*, *Charity* and *Mercy* to
wards Men, and in *inward purity*, and careful
avoiding the Pollutions, which abound in th
World through Luſt. They plainly tell us tha
Sacrifices and Offerings, *Prayers*, hearing th
Word, and all Performances of the *outward*
part of Religion, tho they be gone about with
the greateſt care and diligence amounts to no
thing, and are utterly diſpleaſing to God, i
they be ſeparated from *inward Divotion* and *pu-*
rity of Soul, and from a due care to live *right-*
ouſly, *ſoberly and Godly*, Pſal. 50. 8, 9, 14, 15.
But ſince it is ſo plainly told us, both in the
Books of the old Teſtament and the New, tha
God will not be pleaſed with our *outward* Per-
formances, and our *pretences* of reſpect for him,
and of *zeal* for Truth and Righteouſneſs, if we
neglect the weightier Matters of the Law.
How comes it that ſo many ſtill neglect the
weightier Matters of the Law, while they are
very foreward in performing the leſſer

Whence

Whence this this is, will partly appear from that which follows.

3. *There are some,* and it is to be feared too often, not a few, *who notwithstanding their care and Diligence in performing the outward Offices of Piety and Religion, and their forewardnesse and zeal for things of lesser moment, are yet quite void and destitute of inward respect for God, and of all sense of Religion.* These People find that such Shews and Pretences of Religion are serviceable for such ends, as they propose to themselves, and useful for obtaining, the things which they project and design, and so they are prompted to the performance of the *outward Offices* of Piety by their Lusts and Passions, and their *zeal* for such ways and Opinions is excited and warmed thereby. They find that they may behave thus without doing aay *violence* to their *fleshly nature,* and to their *corrupt inclinations* and Appetites; yea such a course becomes grateful and advantagious thereunto; while they perceive how gainful and *advantagious* it may prove to them in the *prosecution* of their *carnal* and *worldly designs.* They see that by such a behrviour Men come to be considered by others as *religious persons,* and that they themselves may thus purchase and preserve such an esteem and reputation, & so may be capable of all these advantages, which they may reap by the esteem and good Opinion of others. This sufficiently

sufficiently serving them to all their intents and purposes, they stop here and go no further in Religion.

But it is not to be thought, that all who are thus forward in the *external* Performances of Religion, and express a great deal of *Zeal* for some doubtful Opinions, and for Matters of lesser Weight and Moment, while they neglect the *weightier Matters of the Law*, are of this sort of men, there is no doubt, but there are not a few, who believe the Gospel, and do not question the Truth and Reality of the Things proposed therein, and are serious in what they do, and earnestly desire the Life and Blessedness which is to be obtained on the terms of obedience to the Laws of Christ, but their Lusts are too strong and they are enslaved thereunto, the *sense* which they have of a *future Eternity* of Bless or Misery urges them on the one hand to take some effectual course for avoiding the one and reaching the other, and pressing them to apply themselves to the practice of Piety, and to the Obedience of the Laws of the Gospel. On the other hand their *Lusts* proving too strong for them, pull them back from such a Course, as being contrary or destructive to them. They being thus tossed betwixt these two; and there being such a conflict betwixt their *Conscience* and their *Lusts*, come to settle on this mean, whereby some-

what

hat is granted to their *Conſcience*, and yet their *rrupt Nature* is not much thwarted or *croſſed* ney *take up with* ſo much of Religion as may ſome meaſure pleaſe the one, and is not ve- diſagreeable to the other: they will *go no rther* in Religion than their Luſts and cor- pt Inclinations will allow them; and by ſuch utward *Performances* and Expreſſions of Zeal heir *Conſcience* is calmed and ſilenced, and their *Luſts* are gratified, while no more is done by hem. If at any time ſuch Performances and Expreſſions of *Zeal* are found to oppoſe or to e inconſiſtent with their *carnal* and wordly ntereſt, they either then lay them quite aſide, rif they cannot do ſo for the *Clamours* of their Conſcience; they animate themſelves by the *ope* of the Life to come, to overcome the Re- uctance of their Luſts: and they find this ſo nuch the more eaſie to them, ſince theſe ſe- arated from the great and more ſubſtantial Offices of Religion, are not a little ſerviceable o their Luſts, theſe being thereby better ſecu- ed from the Blows directed and intended to ill and deſtroy them, and lurking and finding Protection under the ſhadow of ſuch Perfor- nances.

Beſides all the Perſons already mentioned, it nay be ſuppoſed that there are *not a few*, in whom GOD hath wrought a great *Propenſion* o a Holy and Religious courſe of Life, and who

who are well inclined towards GOD and R
ligion, and do truly and sincerly design to se
GOD and obey him, who yet by the sec
and imperceptible Workings of *corrupt Nat*
in them, and through *trusting* too much to
skilful guides, come to bestow their great ca
in *outward Offices* of piety, and to spend the
Zeal upon lesser things, while they too much
gle & the *greater* and *weightier Matters of the La*
these well meaning People are *imposed* upo
by the *specious shews* of Piety, and the dazli
lustre of a great *Zeal* for all things pertainin
to Religion, and come to look on a *humbl*
quiet and silent *Devotion* and Godliness, th
accompanied with *Justice* and *Mercy*, with *Tem*
perance and Sobriety, with *Constancy* and Fort
tude, with *Meekness* and Patience, with *Lov*
and Charity towards all Men, with *peaceable*
ness and Contentment, with *Submission* and Re
signacion to the Divine Will; and the other gra
cious Qualifications so much recommended t
us in the Gospel, as a *lower* state of *Religion*, thr
the *wrong Notions* of Religion, which they
have imbibed, the *false Idea* of it, which they
have impressed upon their Minds, they look
on all others who do not express the like *fore*
wardness with themselves in the performance
of all the *outward Offices* of Piety; and have
not the like *boisterous Zeal* for all their *little O*
pinions, as either quite *destitute* of true Piety

r as *Lukewarm* in Religion. Theſe perſons
hrough the ſecret, but powerful working of
rrupt Nature, of which they are not aware,
or ſufficiently ſenſible, place the main part
f Religion in *external* Obſervances and Per-
rmances, and in a *Zeal* for their *ſet* of *Opi-*
ions and Notions about Religion; and come
o ſuch a perſwaſion, and arrive at ſuch a *pre-*
mptuous and overweening conceit of themſelves
hat they are very confident, that they them-
lves and ſuch as are of their Mind and Way,
e alone in the *right Way*, and that all others
ho differ from them in their way and Sen-
iments go ſo far *aſtray* and wander from the
Way of GOD. This their *preſumptuous Opini-*
of themſelves does much incapacitate them
r admitting of wiſer Thoughts about Reli-
ion. So that tho they run hither and thither
hear Sermons, and are *ever learning*, yet
ey ſeldom or *never come to the knowledge* of
e Truth. Tho the Holy Scriptures both of
e Old and New Teſtament do ſo plainly
ate what *true* Religion is, and what it is to
truly religious, and what are the moſt *weigh-*
and moſt ſubſtantial parts of Religion, yet
ey hold faſt deceit; all *true* Repreſentations
Religion being diſagreeable to the *ſet* of
otions, which they have ſo deeply fixed in
eir minds.

It cannot be ſuppoſed, but that ſome among
them

them, while they hear or read the Scriptures are ſometimes convinced that their *Righteouſneſs* and Obedience to the Laws of the Goſpel is very defective, in which caſe it is to be feared, that while they continue in the neglect of many of the *Weightier Matters* of the Law, they endeavour to pacify and ſatisfy their Conſcience by doubling their diligence in performing the *outward* Offices of Religion, and abounding more therein, and in increaſing their *Zeal* to a higher Meaſure for matters of leſſer weight and moment.

It may be thought ſtrange that *Our Lord*, who was ſo *meek* and gentle towards others, and ſpoke to them with ſo great mildneſs and ſweetneſs, does carry ſo *ſeverly* towards this ſort of People, who were not quite irreligious and did in many things obey the *Law* of God and did profeſs a great reſpect and pretend to a great deal of *Zeal* for it, and on that account were in great Reputation among the people, and were highly eſteemed by them, while here, and elſe where he denounces a *Wo* againſt them, and gives them ſuch a bad Character, calling them *Hypocrites*, but it will eaſily appear how *juſt* and reaſonable this his *dealing* and behaviour towards them was, if we conſider theſe things following,

1. Perſons of this ſort are generally *Proud* and Haughty, and value themſelves on account of their

External Performances and Obſervances, and of their great Profeſſion of Zeal and Reſpect for GOD and Religion, they comparing themſelves with others, who do quite neglect all Religious Duties, or even with theſe who being more intent about the weightier Matters of the Law, ſeem to them not ſo officious in the leſſer Matters, as they themſelves are; take themſelves to be advanced in a Religious courſe of Life beyond others, and look on themſelves as perſons of *ſingular Piety*, and as more eminent therein; and ſo do over-rate and over-value themſelves, and contemn and deſpiſe others, as inferior to themſelves, and far below them. This their *Pride* and preſumptuous conceit of themſelves is *fomented* and increaſed in them by the *Applauſes* of ſimple People, and the eſteem theſe expreſs for them: who taking their Meaſures of the Piety of others from their fair Profeſſion, and *Specious ſhews* of Zeal and Reſpect for Religion, are deluded thereby. Theſe Men being thus deceived by Flattering themſelves and entertaining a *fond Conceit of their own ſingular Piety* and Proficiency in Religion, and by the falſe Opinion and groundleſs Eſteem which others have for them *Swell with pride*, which Temper is quite contrary to *true Religion*, wherein they think they have come ſo great a length and made great progreſs. They *juſtifie themſelves before Men*,

Luke 16. 15. and appear very religious by these their splended shews, But *that which is highly esteemed amongst Men, is abomination in the sight of GOD.*

2ly. These People come for the most part to have a *strong but presumptuous Hope* of their future Happiness, and of obtaining Eternal Life and Blessedness: and tho they neglect *Judgment, Mercy and the Love of God*, and other weighty matters of the Law, yet they seem to themselves to be in a very safe condition, and think themselves sufficiently secured of the possession of eternal Life, and are very confident of the validity of their right claim and title thereunto. Having this *presumptuous hope* fixed in their minds, and taking themselves to be among the number of the people *of God*, for whom that everlasting rest remains; they are *prone* against all the *means* that are used for awakening Sinners, and for reclaiming them and calling them to *Repeneance* they look on themselves as not *concerned* in the Threatnings of God; they consider these as intended for others, and directed to them: But as for themselves, they think that these are not levelled at them, and that they belong not to them: on this account *grievous sinners, publicans and Harlots*, who have no such shelter, under which they may shrew themselves, and so ly more open to such impressions, as the Threatnings of God are ap-

to make upon the Souls of Men, are ſaid by our Lord and Saviour, *to go into the Kingdom of God before them.*

3*ly.* Theſe Men (which is chiefly to be conſidered) contribute more than any others *for corrupting and depriving the ſentiments of people concerning Religion by repreſenting it* as conſiſting meerly *in outward* performances and ritual obſervances. The eſteem they purchaſe by being ſo nice and preciſe about the matters of the Law, which are of *leſſer weight* and importance; while they yet neglect its weightier Matters, renders the people more capable of being *impoſed upon* by them, and does powerfully influence them to think, that they may be *religious* enough, if they be *ſtrict* and preciſe about theſe *leſſer* Matters, tho they come no greater length in Religion. And as they thus corrupt the minds of ſimple and well-meaning people, ſo they *expoſe Religion* to the *obloquy* and Reproach, *Contempt* and Scorn of others, while they repreſent it as conſiſtent with *groſs Immorality*, which the Light of Nature does ſo much diſallow and does utterly contemn; and with the neglect of theſe Offices which the Law of Nature preſſeth upon all Men. While theſe Men *pervert true Religion*, and contribute ſo much to root out *right Notions* of it, from the Minds of others, and to ſubſtitute *wrong Notions* thereof in their Minds;

they are without doubt, notwithſtanding all their ſpecious ſhews of piety, and their pretences of *Zeal* for Religion, very great Enemies to it, and do more hurt and miſchief to it than any other do or can do. For theſe it ſeems and the like Reaſons our Lord was ſo ſevere to this kind of people.

5. But none are to infer from what hath been ſaid, *That if men be careful in performing the weightier matters of the Law; they may* ſafely neglect theſe which are of leſſer weight and Moment. No ſaith our bleſſed Saviour, ſpeaking to theſe men, who payed Tithes of Mint *&c.* but neglected the weightier Matters of the Law ; *Theſe ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.* It is certain that *true* Religion conſiſts mainly in the *inward Devotion of the Soul* towards GOD, and in the due performance of the Offices of *Juſtice, Charity* and *Mercy* towards men, and that all the *outward* Offices of Piety are only then *parts* of true Religion, and are *only* then *acceptable* to GOD when they are animated with the *Love of God,* and attended with *Judgment* and *Mercy* towards Men ; yet are we in like manner to hold it, as *true* and certain that nothing, which GOD hath commanded, tho it amount to no more, but the *paying Tith of Aniſe, Mint and Cummin* (which it ſeems was enjoyned by the Law of GOD, *Lev. 27. ch. v. 30.*) is to be ne-

neglected. Tho ſome Duties of Religion be of *leſs* weight and moment, being compared with the *weightier* Matters of the Law, yet nothing, which God hath commanded, ſhould be overlooked, or diſregarded by us, as of little weight being conſidered by it ſelf. We are to look on all the Commands of God, as *holy, juſt and good,* and are to *eſteem all his Precepts concerning all things, to be right,* and ſhould have *reſpect to all his Commandments.* There are none, who are *truely religious,* and do truely love and fear God, and have a due reverence and reſpect for his Authority, and are deſirous to pleaſe him, and to be approved by him, but will be *careful* in the performance of whatſoever he hath commanded, and will not *wilfully* neglect the *leaſt* of his Commandments. Whoſoever intends to behave as a *truely* Religious perſon, and hath no mind to cheat and deceive himſelf, and to loſe the Great Reward, which is propoſed to us, is to *have reſpect to all the Commandments of* GOD.

All who are wiſe cannot, but judge that moſt of our Care and Zeal is to be beſtowed on the *weightier matters* of the Law. Thoſe are never to be neglected, they muſt not on any account, or pretence be omitted; Duties of leſſer moment ſhould never juſtle theſe out, the due performance of theſe is the chief part of

of a Religious Life. By the due performance of these *alone* can we take a right measure of our Progress in Religion. And from it *alone* can we make a right Estimate of our selves. According to the *weight* and Importance of the Matters of the Law, our *zeal* and care about them should be proportioned. It seems to be too sure an Evidence of unsoundness and *hypocrisy*, when Men express a great deal of Zeal for Matters of *lesser* moment and concern; when in the mean time the *weightier* Matters of the Law are neglected by them. We are in the first part or place to regard the *weightier* Matters of the Law, and to bestow our Chief care in performing the greater Offices injoyned thereby, but so as we neglect not the *lesser*, and leave these undone. Thus *alone* can we acquite our selves, as *faithful* Servants and Loyal Subjects to GOD, thus *alone* do we *duely acknowledge* his Supreme Authority, and behave sutably to the innumerable Obligations, which lie upon us to serve and obey him.

THE

THE FOURTH DISCOURSE.

The Difference between a True and false Taste and Knowledge of Divine Things.

PSALM CXIX. 66.

Teach me good Judgement and Knowledge: for I have believed thy Commandments.

IN theſe Words, this *good* and *wiſe* Man prays, that GOD may effectually Inſtruct him to *judge a right* of all ſuch Doctrines as are propoſed to him, and may enable him to underſtand throughly theſe, which are good and ſound: and he Confirms his *hope*, and expectation of the grant of theſe Favours to him by the *reſpect* he had, of which he was conſcious to himſelf, *for the Commandments of God*, believing them to be his, and to have proceeded from him.

The firſt thing he ſeeks here is, that he may be taught *judgement*, or as it is in the Original, *a good taſte*. He deſires that GOD may favour him in beſtowing on him a quick underſtanding, and a Gift of *diſcerning*, whereby he may be enabled to *difference* Truth from Errour; and to *judge* not only of the *truth* of whatſoever is propoſed to him, but alſo of its *weight* and Importance, that he may not erre in judging what is ſound and *healthful food*, and what is *frothy* hurtful and *poiſonous*, that he may receive the one and feed upon it, and may reject and refuſe the other.

As the *Body* cannot ſubſiſt without *food*, no more can the *Soul*: the *true* and proper *food* of the Soul, which does maintain its Life, and doth ſtrengthen it, and keep it in good caſe, are thoſe *truths*, which God hath revealed to mankind, concerning Divine things. Theſe are to the Soul of Man ſtrengthening and growing *food*, and prove alſo *medicinal* to him: *miſtakes* about theſe things, Errours and Falſehood are *hurtful* and Poiſonous to him. Among the *truths* God hath revealed to us, ſome are of greater weight, and yeild to the Soul more ſolid and better Nouriſhment, are more *growing food*. Now this *good taſte* or guſt, which this holy man ſeeks from God, is that Gift, whereby one may be diſpoſed to paſs a *right judgement* on whatſoever is propoſed to him; whenſoever

ever he hears it, and attends unto it, & applyes is mind thereunto, and does *taſte* it. That s his Taſte does approve or diſlike it, he may ither embrace it with more or leſs ardency of ffection, as he judges it of more or leſs *weight* r Importance; and ſuch as can afford more r leſs *nouriſhment* to the Soul, and may lay it p with more or leſs care, that he may afterwards by more fixed and continual Applicatiin of mind eat it, *feed and feaſt upon it*: or elſe may reject it, looking upon it as *poiſonous*, pernicious and deſtructive to the Soul, or as hurtful in ſome meaſure, and unhealthful *food* for it, or at leaſt as *frothy and windy* Food, which cannot profit the Soul, or afford to it any good or ſolid Nouriſhment.

This *good taſte* and right guſt of things is much to be valued and deſired, and is much deſired by thoſe who are Pious and Wiſe. This holy Man was ſenſible what a great Benefit it is; Therefore prays that GOD may *teach him good Judgement and Knowledge*, and may endue him with ſound Diſcretion. And indeed it is a *Gift*, which is much to be valued; Men being thereby directed in their *Choice* among ſuch things as are propoſed to them to *graſp* at, and to lay hold on theſe, which may prove moſt *wholeſome*, healthſome and nouriſhing to them, wherewith they may at all times entertain and *nouriſh* their Souls. Thus they

come

come to build up themselves in *their most h* *Faith*, Jude 20. And being entertained wi the best Food; these become healthful, stron vigorous, *fat and flourishing*, and thrive at an ther rate than other Men do. They *negl* and reject such thing as are *hurtful*, and ma beget bad humours in them, and may rend them *proud, presumptuous, contentious and uncha* *table, factious and schismatical*, or may fome their other lusts, or may any other way ma the *Sound Constitution* and Complexion of th Soul, and not minding so much these thing which tho they be sound Food, yet they are l less Use, Benefit and Advantage, and of not g great importance; They entertain themselv with, and feed most upon the *weightier Matte* of the Law, and of Religion, and so are of good Complexion and great Growth.

This *goodness of taste* is not a common and or dinary Gift, even among these, who make a fair Profession of Religion, and pretend to no little *Zeal* for the Truth. It is proper to them *who by reason of use have their senses exercised t* *discern both good and evil*! Such we may reason ably suppose, was that holy Man *Job*, chap. 6 ver. 30. who reproving his Friends for propo sing that, which he discerning to be unsound saith, *Doth not my taste discern perverse things* The far greater part of Men cannot judge a right of the Doctrines proposed to them.

Their

Their guſt and *taſte* of things is quite perverted, they *reliſh* ſuch things as are hurtful, yea, pernicious to them; and if they be ſauced in ſuch manner as is agreeable to their fancy; They wallow them down with greedineſs, while they *neglect* and diſguſt ſuch as might nouriſh them, and might prove healthful and medicinal to them: They willingly and gladly hearken unto vain, airy, empty and groundleſs *Notions* and *Speculations*, and ſuch as can ſerve only to puff them up with a *vain conceit* of Knowledge; But theſe do indeed obſtruct their growth in *true Knowledge* and Wiſdom, and in Chriſtianity; while laying hold on ſuch *empty* things, they neglect *Solid Truth*, and ſuch as may edify them. It needs not ſeem ſtrange to us to ſee People run hither and thither to hear *Sermons*; Since it was long ſince foretold, that the *time will come when Men will not endure Sound Doctrine, but after their own luſts ſhall they heap to themſelves teachers, having itching Ears.* Theſe People, tho they hear *Sound* Doctrine delivered, they reject it, or paſs it by; But if there be any *refuſe* mingled with it, that is carefully laid up by them. Hence, tho *they be ever learning*, and ramble hither and thither for that effect, *yet they never come to the knowledge of the Truth*, 2 Tim. 3. 7. according to the *Food* which they chuſe, wherewith their Souls are entertained, they continue ſtill to be very *defective* Chriſtians,

Chriſtians, and are ſtill of little growth a
of low ſtature, and advance little in true a
ſolid Piety and Vertue.

It may be enquired, whence it proceeds th
Mens *taſte* is ſo exceedingly depraved and co
rupted, that they have ſuch an *Averſion* fro
Sound & *Wholſome* Doctrine, while they greed
ly follow *dirt* and *refuſe*, yea, ſometimes poiſo
It is from their own *luſts*, theſe they are unw
ling to part with, and ſo cannot *endure Sou*
Doctrine, which ſtrikes at their luſts, and bree
no little ſmart to them. Thus tho they kno
GOD to be the *Chief Good*, and the only tru
Good of the Soul of Man, and can diſcour
of the *vanity* of all worldly things, yet bein
ſo cloſely united to theſe by their *inordina*
love thereunto, they cannot endure to hea
Sound Doctrine, whereby they are taught tha
He is not to be found by them, unleſs the
be weaned from all other things, and *abando*
them, and ſhift about to ſee if they can gathe
from what they hear, any thing, which ma
incourage them to think that they may hop
to reach that bleſſed State of *Union with* GOD
and yet gratifie their *luſts*, by indulging t
them: They *diſguſt* and cannot endure ſuc
Doctrine, as tends to drive them from their co
vetous practices, and from the corrupt courſe
whereby they purſue Honour and Reputatio
among Men, or fleſhly pleaſure, or otherwi
ſer

ve their luſts, and greedily graſp at any ng, which may countenance their licentious urſes. They *reject* with indignation any ng which ſeems in the leaſt meaſure to re- ct upon the Party to which they have adjoi- d themſelves, or may tend to its diſparage- nt, and may leſſen the Reputation thereof th the People. Tho they know that *with- Holineſs none can ſee the Lord*, yet they can- t endure that ſevere Doctrine, which teach- that *Holineſs* is inconſiſtent with a free in- lgence to our luſts. They abuſe the Do- ine of the *imputation of Chriſts Righteouſneſs*, d reject ſuch ſound Doctrine as repreſents the ſolute neceſſity of *denying our ſelves*, and *re- ncing our own will and deſires, and obeying all the aws of Jeſus*; as derogatory to his perfect and mpleat Righteouſneſs, and as Legal, and not agreeable to the Goſpel. Being proud and aughty, and having no ſmall conceit of their wn knowledge, they diſtaſte and diſlike every *Doctrine* which agreeth not with their ſet of Thoughts and Opinions, and with the Form f Knowledge, which they have imbibed; and perciliouſly reject it, as falſe and erroneous. uch Doctrines as repreſent to us the ſeveral Offices of a Chriſtian Life, are deſpiſed and onſidered by them as *fit only for babes*, not for uch advanced Chriſtians as they take them- elves to be. They are too full *malice*, wrath

and

and indignation, against all who are not of the way, or who have at any time appeared against it; and so cannot be pleased with anything said by them. *Finally,* They do but superficially read and study the holy Scripture and do not penetrate into the true sense and meaning thereof; but content themselves with the sound of some Words scattered up and down and pervert those to their own great hurt and dammage, if not to their perdition. In a word no Doctrine pleases them; their taste is hugely vitiated, but such as doth one way or other serve them for upholding a *false conceit* in their minds, of the safety of thir State and Condition; And for maintaining in themselves the Hope of a Blessed Eternity, tho they walk *after the flesh, and fulfil the lusts thereof.*

Tho so many have their *taste* thus vitiated, yet it pleaseth GOD to bestow this Favour upon some, that they may come to have a *good Taste and Judgement,* which comes to pass in this or the like manner. By the *Divine Illumination* they come to know and to apprehend distinctly that the Blessedness of Man is in *Union with* GOD, the Chief and Infinit Good: And that we are by the Gospel called to this Blessedness, Jesus having suffered death upon the Cross for this effect, that he may bring us to GOD, they likewise have a clear and lively Preception of the *vanity of all things worldly,* and know

ow that the great Deſign of GOD in all the evelations he hath made to us of His Will, is turn us from all inferiour things, that we may me unto GOD by Jeſus. Men cannot have is *good taſte* until by this Senſe they be awaened to *pant* earneſtly, and to *thirſt for the li*ing GOD, and to aſpire to this bleſſed Uni-n. Further, They become deeplie ſenſible, hat it is neceſſarie, before we can be made appie in being united to GOD, that there be great Change wrought on us, that our Naures be renewed, our Deformities removed, nd that we come in ſome meaſure to reſemble lim, and *to be like Him.* They cannot have a ight *taſte* of things, nor judge aright thereof, ntil they know and ſufficientlie apprehend that here can be *no Union* betwixt that infinitlie oly and pure Beeing, and unholy and impure ouls, betwixt that Chief and unſpotted Beauty, nd ugly and deformed ſouls. Before we can e *united to God*, there muſt be ſome *Conformity* n our *nature* to His holy Nature: For *without Holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord*, Heb. 12. 14. By this ſenſe, there muſt be incited in them an earneſt deſire after Holineſs, and a *hunger and hirſt after Righteouſneſs*, Matth. 5. 6. As alſo, a conſtant care to *do the will* of GOD, and to *obey his Commandments*, and by them to repair the Image of GOD in our ſelves, and to mould and form our ſelves thereby to His Likeneſs.

It

It is only those Persons, who can have a go
Taste, and can judge aright of the thing
which are proposed to them, who are due
sensible that GOD, as he offers himself to
in Christ Jesus is the only true GOOD of th
Soul of Man, and do earnestly desire to be
ted to Him, and to aspire to that blessed U
nion, and who knowing that Holiness an
Righteousness dispose men for that bless
Union, seek Righteousness and follow a
after it, and use their utmost endeavours t
reach it; and to advance themselves in i
The more clear and distinct their Perceptio
of the True Good of Man, and their Know
ledge of it, and of the Necessity of Righteou
ness and Holiness for disposing us for the Fru
ition and Enjoyment of that Good is, and th
more earnest their Desires after these, and th
greater their Diligence in the pursuit there
are; Their *Taste* is so much the bette
Such Souls are in good Case; Especially
they continue in the Study and Meditation
the Scriptures, with due Care and Diligence
and in fervent Prayer for Light from GOD
and have their *Senses exercised to discern bot
Good and evil*: If withal they continue Hum
ble, and keep their Minds calm and undi
turbed, free and disintangled from Faction an
Parties, and avoid all Excess in their respe
for Fleshly Pleasures, Wealth and Greatne

nd all other Worldly Things. These Per ns have a *Good Taste*, and can discern both ood and evil, and among such Things as are ood can perceive, which are most useful and f greatest weight and importance, and tend ost to the promoting of their true Good nd Happiness.

This good Man doth likeways pray here, hat GOD may teach him Knowledge, *Teach e good Judgement and Knowledge*, saith he. The Object of this *Knowledge*, which he seeks from GOD are *Divine* Things, even these Things which GOD hath revealed to Men by his Word. That which he seeks is not a superfi- cial view of these Things by which Men are enabled to talk and discourse about them; but a more clear and distinct Perception of them, and such as is *affective*, and formeth such Impressions on the Soul as are suteable to the nature of the Things thus known and perceived. Which Knowledge GOD teaches men and communicats unto them, when by Reading, Meditation and Prayer; or Attention to those, who are wise, they come to *see*, understand and perceive them. This Knowledge of these things is not a transient and passing *view*, which suddenly evanisheth; but it is a fixed and *permanent* Light, which abides in the Mind and shines more and more unto the per-

ſect day, by the which they are directed i
the whole courſe of their Life.

This Holy Man had already a good meaſur
of it, but he ſeeks the increaſe of it, and wa
hopeful to obtain it. When men have recei
ved any Meaſure of this Knowledge; they ar
by that, which they have obtained rendere
more capable of further Degrees of it. The
are by that which they have already receive
excited to deſire the increaſe of it, and to bed
ligent for that effect in their Endeavors after it
The Heart of him that hath underſtanding, ſaith th
wiſe *Solomon*, *ſeeketh knowledge*, Prov. 15. 14. Such
as are quite void and deſtitute of it, hate *Know-
ledge* they have no value and eſteem for it, they
care not for it, but contemn & deſpiſe it & quit
negle& the means by which it may be obtained
But they who have reached ſome meaſure of it
do prize it much, and conſider it as worthy o
their greateſt care and Diligence, and are ver
earneſt in the purſuit of it. As ſome Degree
of it received by men awaken in them an ear-
neſt Deſire after more, and excite them to a
careful and diligent purſuit of a larger meaſure
of it; ſo by that *Meaſure* of Knowledge, which
a Man hath received, his *Mind* is enlarged &
widned for receiving and entertaining more
of it. One Degree of Knowledge is a ſtep to
another; the more a man knows, he is the
more

more receptive of Knowledge and the more capable of Advancement, and progreſs in Knowledge. *Knowledge* finds not eaſie acceſs unto thoſe minds, which are quite blind and ignorant. But when once it enters in any meaſure, more of it eaſily follows after that, which is already there. One *Degree* of Knowledge makes way for more of it, and does fit and diſpoſe the mind for receiving it. *Knowledge is eaſie to him that underſtandeth.* GOD teacheth Men Knowledge by bleſſing their Endeavours after it with ſucceſs.

Teach me, ſaith he, *Good Judgement and knowledge; for I have believed thy Commandments.* He had a ſpecial Reſpect for the Commandments of GOD, and believed that they proceeded from him, and were his Commandments, and that they were good and proper for directing men in the way which leadeth to him, and he purpoſed to obſerve and keep them, and was very deſirous ſo to do; and he prayed that God might give him *Good* Judgement and Knowledge, that he might be thereby fitted for giving due obedience to them. No doubt but being conſcious to himſelf of his reſpect to the Commandments of GOD, and of his purpoſe and deſign to improve all the Knowledge which GOD ſhould be pleaſed to beſtow on him, for furthering himſelf in the

course of Obedience to his Laws & Comman-
ments, he was thereby confirmed in the Hop
& Expectation of the Favour which he sough
from GOD. And without doubt a *due re-*
spect for the Commandments of GOD, and a sin
cere and firm purpose to improve the Judge-
ment and Knowledge which GOD shall be
pleased to teach us for advancing our selves i
conformity to his holy Nature, Will an
Laws, does much dispose us for the Recepti
on of larger Measures of good Judgment an
Knowledge, and for a right and clear Percep
tion of Divine Things, and may encourag
and confirm our Hopes, that GOD on ou
humble Adress to him for that effect will gran
these to us.

We are to believe, and to give a firm as-
sent to whatsoever GOD hath revealed to u
in his Word; and are to consider all thing
contained in his Word as true, since they are
revealed by him, who is Truth it self, and
who cannot lie. The Commandments of God
taken in a strict sense, and considered singly
by themselves, since there is nothing either as-
serted or denyed therein, are not the proper
Objects of Belief: But if they be taken e-
very one of them as the part of a Proposition
such as that GOD hath commanded us to love
him, or to Love our Neighbour, or hath for-
and

bidden us to take his Name in Vain, or to kill or to steal; or if they be considered together with the Promises and Threatnings annexed thereunto, we may be said properly to believe them. We may be said in a very proper sense to believe that they are the Commands of GOD, that they are *Holy*, *Just* and *Good*, that they teach us the way to Life and Blessedness and that in *keeping of them there is a great Reward.* Thus we must all believe them before we can be disposed for giving due Obedience to them,

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The

THE FIFTH DISCOURSE

The Difference between true and false Zeal.

PSAL. CXIX. CXXXIX.

My Zeal hath consumed me, because my Enemies have forgotten thy word.

WE have here *an account how this holy* Man was affected with the Wickedness of his Enemies and Persecutors, his *Heart was stirred within him*, and the zeal he had for GOD and his Interest was so inflamed, while he saw his Enemies express such neglect and contempt for the Word of GOD, and for his Law and Commandments, that they did cast them behind their back aud did quite forget them, and shewed no respect nor regard for them in their Actions, and in the course of their

heir Lives, that his ſtrength and vigour was lmoſt quite conſumed and exhauſted there-y.

All good men, who are of a right temper, re *zealous* for God and his Intereſt, and are uch concerned for Truth and Righteouſneſs hey do much reſent the Contempt of God nd Religion, and are grieved with the Indig-ities which are done thereunto.

Zeal is a thing about which there is no little Talk in this Age among us, but it ſeems not o be well underſtood. Many ſeem to be in a great miſtake about it, while they conſider them as *zealous*, who that they may promote their *peculiar Opinions* and the intereſt of the *Party* to which they have adjoyned themſelves make a great buſtle and noiſe, and do no little diſturb themſelves, and all about them. They take them to be *zealous*, who contend earneſtly, yea furiouſly about exernal *Modes* and *Forms*, and are ſo much concerned for every *little Opinion*, which they think true and ſound that they *hate*, revile, reproach and perſecute ſo much as they can, thoſe, who oppoſe them or even differ from them. Such a *zeal* being ſo common, and being recommended by rath and unadviſed perſons, it will not be unfit briefly to ſhew what true and *Chriſtian zeal* is

Doubtleſs it is not that zeal, which the A-poſtle

postle *James* calls *bitter zeal* (so it is in the original Language, tho in our Translation it is bitter envying) which is opposite to *true love and Charity*, and seems to be nothing else but *pride* and Envy, Malice and Cruelty somewhat *tinctured* with Religious Intentions and Inclinations, and it may be too often with meer shews of Respect for GOD and Religion: nor is it a *blind zeal*, such as the Apostle *Paul* ascribes to the *Jews*, *Rom.* 10. 2. and such as was in *Paul* himself before his Conversion, when he persecuted the Church, a *Zeal which is not according to Knowledge*; nor is it a *factious zeal*, whereby Men of a Turbulent Temper are driven to stretch beyond their Line, and to act without their Sphere to the disturbance of Peace and Order. Neither is it such a *zeal* as some men express, who, tho they have little or no true Love for GOD and Religion, as the course of their Lives doth too abundantly testifie, yet being forward and violent, and of a warm and hot temper shew themselves very earnest in *contending* for their own *Party* and their way and for their Sentiments and *Opinions*.

But true and Christian zeal is quite another thing than any of these, it being a certain warmth and heat excited in pious Souls by the Spirit of God, whereby Men become *fervent in Spirit* in all the exercises of Religion. The

Spirit

spirit of GOD is its Author, it is he alone which kindles this Flame. All these Heats which proceed from another Original are wild-fire. The subject in which it is, are *pious* Souls. A true zeal cannot reside any where else, tho the principal Ingredients in it are an *ardent Love* to GOD; and consequently a great concernedness for his Service and interest, and a great Indignation against every thing which is contrary thereunto, yet it seems to be a *fervency* of *all the Affections for* GOD, whereby all of them are kindled and move strongly. How this true and Christian zeal is differenced from these counterfeits, which bear some resemblance of it, will sufficiently appear from that which followeth, *True and Christian* zeal is attended with knowledge. It is always according to Knowledge and they in whom it is are fully assured that the object of the zeal, of the heat and warm of their Affections is a *good thing*, or somewhat which they are assured is evil, injurious to GOD and Religion, and obstructive of some great good. It is guided and managed by *Wisdom*, prudence and Discretion, and does not drive men to undecent and *extravagant Actions*; it is proportionated according to the *Weight* and Importance of the Things, which excite it. It is not equally stirred against the neglect of Duties, which are of less

Mo-

Moment and Importance, as it is against the neglect of the *weightier Matters* of the Law, or against Mistakes and false *Opinions* which have no great Tendency either to corrupt our Life and Manners, or to *subvert* our Faith, as it is against such *Errors* as overthrow the Fundamentals of Religion. It is without doubt an unreasonable and dangerous mistake to think that we are bound to express as great *zeal* for matters of less concern, as for such as are of *the greatest*; and to contend as keenly for *petty Opinions*, as for the *Fundamentals* of Christianity. This were, considering our Condition here in the World, who cannot be of one mind concerning such matters about Religion which are not evidently revealed, to banish *Peace* and *Concord* for ever out of all religious Societies. *Blind zeal* is a furious Thing, and is of a baser Original, 'tis a disturber of Peace and Order.

As *true and Christian zeal* is attended with Knowledge, *Luke* 9. 53. 54. 55. 56. so it is tempered with *Love* and *Charity*. It is a gentle Flame, which being excited in good Souls by the Fountain and Author of Love and Peace is not hurtful to others: it hath nothing of Malice in it, it does not seek the ruine of any, nor contribute thereunto. Our Lord sufficiently teacheth us, what manner of zeal is sutable to the Spirit and Temper, which the Gospel

Gospel tends to frame in us; while he rebukes his Disciples, who *moved that fire might be calledfor from Heaven to consume the* Samaritans; who had carried inhumanely towards him, and saith to them, *ye know not of what manner of Spirit ye are of: for the Son of Man is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save them.* The Christian Spirit is charitable, good, benign meek and patient, ready to do all good Offices to all men, and to have nothing of Malice, Ill-will, bitterness, hatred or sourness in it, without doubt this heavenly Flame, *true and Christian zeal*, does not carry those in whom it is, to hate, to speak evil, reproach and revile or to curse and persecute such as *differ* from them in their sentiments about Religion, and in their Apprehensions about matters belonging thereunto, even tho they be of *greater* weight and Moment, *farless* if they differ only from them in points of lesser moment, and in some Rites and Ceremonies, and in modes of Worship and Government. That *zeal* without doubt is not to be allowed, which carries men to *violate* the great and *Fundamental Laws* of Religion and renders them fierce, cruel, unjust, turbulent and disturbers of the peace, and order in the Society of which they are Members. *True zeal* may prompt men to use all gentle, soft and just means for gaining such Dissenters from them in matters of greater

weight

weight and Moment, but it will not carry the *proudly to impose* upon them, or *maliciously* perſecute them: it may well ſet them on t deſtroy their *Errors* by all good and lawf means, and by all fair and juſt means to ob ſtruct the Influence, theſe their errors, if the be of greater importance, may have for per verting others; but it never incites to deſtro the perſons of Diſſenters. That malicion and perſecuting zeal, which abounds ſo much in all Chriſtian Societies in this corrupt Age, ſeems to be quite diſagreeable to the true *Chriſtian* Spirit and Temper.

True zeal, and ſuch as is of a right ſtamp *burns* moſt inwards and conſumes the Luſts and unruly paſſions, which are there. It moves them in whom it is to ſet themſelues with all earneſtneſs to *oppoſe* their *own pride*, Ambition, Covetouſnes, Malice, Revenge and whatſoever elſe they find within themſelves contrary to the holy Nature and Will of GOD and obſtructive to their intire Subjection to him: it prompts them to beſtow great care in reforming all the Errors and Diſorders of their Lives. When it appears it is ſtirred not only againſt erroneous and falſe Opinions and Corruptions in Divine Worſhip and Government; but alſo againſt the Corruption, which is too viſible in the Life and Manners of the generality of men It is *impartial* and moves them in whom it is, to

diſ-

displeaſure againſt the ſinful Lives and corrupt manners not only of ſuch as diſſent from them, but alſo againſt the corrupt Courſes of theſe who hold the ſame Opinion with themſelves and are of their way and party. It excites them not ſo much to make *Proſelites* to their *party* and *Opinions*, as to perſwade men to ſubject themſelves to Jeſus to *take his yoke upon* them, and in obedience to his Laws *to live godly righteouſly and ſoberly.*

True Chriſtian zeal is not a Counterfeit thing, by which one bluſters, and makes a noiſe abroad, and often kindles no little fire of *contention* among Men, while there is no heat within; but coldneſs and indifferency. It hath great Effects upon a Mans own ſelf. It proves ſometimes not a little hurtful to the Body, that the Soul is thus enflamed. Tho the zeal of good Men be harmleſs to others, and do not contribute to wrong them in any manner; yet in ſome it may be in ſuch a large meaſure and degree, that it preys upon their Body and conſumes themſelves. So this good Man here teſtifies of himſelf, while he ſaith Pſal. 69. 9. *My zeal hath conſumed me*, and elſewhere he ſaith, the *Zeal of thy houſe hath eaten me up.* Which words of the holy Man were applyed to our Lord and Saviour by his Diſciples. The frail and mortal Body of Man cannot bear ſuch ſtrong agitations of the Will and Affections without

without hurt: these do, where Zeal is in great Degree, and these pure flames burn mo hotely, much exhaust, and dry up the natu Moisture and bring a Decay upon the Bod and render it lean and meager. Tho Christi prudence does direct good Men so to temp their *zeal*, that it may have no such Malign i fluence on the Body, yet it seems a great ras ness to censure those, if there were any suc who are consumed with the burning heat these pure flames.

That which excited the zeal of this ho Man, and kindled it to such a degree, wa that he did clearly and plainly discern by th course and Actions of his Enemies, that the had no respect for the Words of God, but di utterly neglect them, and had quite *forgotte them.* And indeed this is a just cause for an in tense zeal, when the great and indispensabl Duties of Religion are quite neglected, an Men do whatsoever they will, and run suc courses as their corrupt inclinations, lusts an passions prompt them to, without any regar to the Laws of God, wherein he doth so se verely prohibite all such practices. They hav too good ground to suspect their *zeal* not t be true and *Christian zeal*, and such as it shoul be, which is excited only by the different Sen timents of others about Matters of *no gre weight* and importance, or about doubtful O

pinion

nions, and such as are in debate among wise nd good Men, or about Rites and Ceremonies Worship, *or Modes of Government*, if in the ean time they are little moved; tho they see e great and fundamental Laws of the Go- el quite neglected and forgotten, and per- ive thatnot afew in the whole course oftheir ives do openly avow, and manifestly declare eir contempt of God and of his Laws. The *bounding iniquity* of the Time and Age in which e live, may justly kindle and inflame the *Zeal* of all good Men, who cannot, being In- pired with *divine love*, but be much moved to ee, that while there are so many, who pre- end so great respect for God, and for his Laws, uch practices do generally so much abound, s are altogether disagreeable thereunto, and lainly disallowed and condemned thereby.

THE

THE SIXTH DISCOURSE

The Aim of a true Christian and the way to prosecute it.

MATTHEW V. 48.
Be ye Perfect.

THe *Perfection* of Man consists in Conformity and *likeness* to *God*. It consists in the participation of the *Divine Perfections*, which are communicable to the Creature. Then are Men perfect, when they have reached the utmost measure of Knowledge and Holiness, and want nothing of what they should have, and of which they are capable; when they are so far like God, as is possible.

Perfection is not to be found amongst Mortals. There are none perfect in this Life: Our present State and Condition will not admit of it. Even the best on Earth are far from it. Some there are, who have made some progress

rds it, and are being compared with others fect; we remain still here imperfect and de-tive; none do advance so far towards it; t they may reach further. We are not, ile we are here capable of perfection, The gels and *Saints departed* are perfect; while e are *Mortals* we can but look after it, and sh for it.

Perfection on Earth is but a Dream. That en conceit, and take themselves to be perfect, proceedeth from their imperfection, That e do mistake our selves so far, and do not rceive any defect or imperfection in our lves, proves us to be very defective. We ould be humbled under the *sense* of our imper-ctions and bewail them. We should, being ieved, that we are so far from it, *press forc-ards* and stretch our selves towards that, *hich is before*; we should being unsatisfied ith our present measure, and ashamed that e are so defective, still *follow* after perfection, ho we cannot reach it, we may be far *more erfect* than we are. We are at a great loss, hen we think we have gone so far as we can. here is much before us, which may be at-ained, many have out-gone us, and have reach-d a higher measure; it is fit we have *high aims* nd vast Desires, and be still earnest in the ursuit of it. Who do most follow it, shall hare most of it. What a lamentable thing is

it, that we, who profess our selves to be t
Disciples of CHIRST, do not make it o
great Business to become *like God*? what po
and mean Projects and Designs keep us cont
nually Drudging? few do aspire after perfec
on; few do bewail their distance from i
and use their utmost endeavours therein th
they may *be perfect*. Men toile and travel
encrease their Estate; but few attempt to *pe*
fect themselves. Here is the aim and projec
which is most proper for man, even to perfe
himself, and aspire after conformity unto Go
If we have a mind to it, these few Direction
may be of use to us.

1. We are to use all Care and Diligence t
attain to a more *perfect Understanding* of th
Laws and Commandments of Christ. We a
carefully to search after the Mind of Chri
therein, that we may come to know what is H
Good and Acceptable Will. There are *De*
in the Laws of Christ, which are not obviou
to every Eye. Every Reader seeth not th
Wonders of His Laws. Diligently read His Law
and meditate upon them, Pray for Light fro
Heaven to Understand them, wait for th
Teaching of the Annointing. Use your utmo
Endeavours to come to the true Understand
ing thereof, *Search* impartially without pre
judice; Do not essay to accommodate them t
the manners and fashions of the World, or t

you

our own courses and customes. Likewise hose of them, which ye understand, let them ot be slighted by you; Lay them not aside or orget them; Set up that Light in your Mind, hat it may shine, and direct you in your Actiins. Listen to the Laws of Christ, convert your Minds unto them, that ye may hear Him talk o you, and commune with you.

2. We are to set before us, for our *Imitation*, he Lives of the Saints recorded in Scripture, nd above all, the Holy Life of our LORD Jeus. It doth greatly marr our Progres, that we ook to no other Patterns; but these of the ime and place wherein we live. We are diligently to observe, and carefully to consider, what is recorded of the Holy Life of our Saviour, while He was here upon Earth, and hould be moulding and framing our selves according to that high *Pattern*; We should endeavour to trace His Steps, and to express the Vertues, which brightly did shine forth in Him.

3. The great and *fundamental Points* of Christian Religion, should be often in our Minds: We should frequently remember and consider hese things, such as the *Love of God* in sending His Son, the *Suffering of Christ Jesus*, His Death, Resurrection, Ascention, His Kingdom, Power, nd Authority, His Return to judge the World, Death, Judgement, the Eternal Felicity of the

Godly, the misery of the damned, &c. Th
great and most *necessary Points* of the Christia
Religion, should be the Subject of our dail
Thoughts; These should be our daily Foo
on these we should, through the serious Appl
cation of our Souls thereunto, be continuall
feeding, in these the Life of our Souls is wra
ped up, these are the great Motives and Enco
ragements to a holy Life. By a firm *Belief* an
serious *Consideration* thereof, our Spirits ar
made firm and resolute to follow GOD; thu
they are excited to the careful and constan
Practice of all the Duties of Holiness; thus w
are moved to go through all the difficulties w
meet with, in the Ways of GOD with Reso
lution. We should call in our Minds to behol
God as he hath manifested himself in the Go
pel, and to contemplate these great and mo
concerning Truths in Christian Religion: Thu
our Hearts are lifted up in the *Ways of God*, Life
Strength and Vigour enter into our Souls
which become weak through debasing them
selves to low and mean things.

These two things do *greatly hinder* us in ou
course towards perfection, the *inordinate lov
of our selves*, and *the love of the world*. We ar
to apply our selves with all care and diligence
to remove these great *Lets* out of the way
We must *deny our selves*, and become regardless
what be the Condition of our outward man
her

re in the World: We must live as *if we were*
, and God were all. We must resolve that
is Will be the only Rule of our Actions, that
is Love alone move and excite us to all we do.
e must not project a safe, easie and prospe-
ous Life, but must forget our selves; We must
ee our selves from the *inordinate love* of this
fe, and the slavery of the body, and the too
reat regard all naturally have for their out-
ard man. We must resolve to *thwart the flesh*,
nd not spare the outward man, if we mind to
spire towards Perfection, our Bodies must be
rought into Subjection; The *outward man*
must be put to hard and toilsome labour, and
must be exposed to many stormy blasts. We
must resolve that the *outward man* be under a
levere restraint, and be bound up from the use
of sensual pleasures.

We should be begetting in our Minds a root-
ed *contempt* of the vanities of the World. The
love of the World is a great hinderance to us, and
doth obstruct our proficiencie. We can never
make any considerable Progress towards Per-
fection, unless we come to undervalue and
disesteem the World, become *dead to it*, and
find our selves little concerned in *present things*.
We must be affected towards them as becomes
Pilgrims and *Strangers*, our Hearts must be ta-
ken off them, we must lose our esteem and af-
fection for them, else we cannot live a Holy

and

and Spiritual Life, or come any length tow
Perfection. These are *imperfect souls*, who l
and value these fading vanities.

Many other things suitable to this Purp
might be added; But seeing *it is better to k*
a little and practise it, than to know much and
nothing, we will forbear to mention any oth
thing, lest we should thereby hinder y
from remembring and practising what ye ha
heard.

FINIS.

7 JU 55

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